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CHARLOTTE BRONTË. A MONOGRAPH.

X.

WITH the autumn of 1851 another epoch in the life of Charlotte Brontë was ushered in. She began to write *Villette*. Something has already been said of the true character of that marvellous book, in which her own deepest experiences and ripest wisdom are given to the world. Of the manner in which it was written her readers know nothing. Yet this, the best-beloved child of her genius, was brought forth with a travail so bitter that more than once she was tempted to lay aside her pen and hush her voice for ever. Every sentence was wrung from her as though it had been a drop of blood, and the book was built up bit by bit, amid paroxysms of positive anguish, occasioned in part by her own physical weakness and suffering, but still more by the torture through which her mind passed as she depicted scene after scene from the darkest chapter in her own life, for the benefit of those for whom she wrote. It is from her letters that at this time also we get the best indications of what she was passing through. Few, perhaps, reading these letters would suppose that their writer was at that very time engaged in the production of a great masterpiece, destined to hold its own among the ripest and finest fruits of English genius. But no one can read them without seeing how true the woman's soul was, how deep her sympathy with those she loved, how keen her criticisms of even the dull and commonplace characters around her, how vivid and sincere her interest in everything which was

passing either in the great world which lay afar off, or in the little world the drama of which was being enacted under her own eyes. Even the ordinary incidents mentioned in her letters, the chance expressions which drop from her pen, have an interest when we remember who it is that speaks, and at what hour in her life this speech falls from her.

"September, 1851.

"I have mislaid your last letter, and so cannot look it over to see what there is in it to answer; but it is time it was answered in some fashion, whether I have anything to say or not. Miss —'s note is very like her. All that talk about 'friendship,' 'mutual friends,' 'auld lang syne,' &c., sounds very like palaver. Mrs. — wrote to me a week or a fortnight since—a well-meaning, amiable note, dwelling a good deal, excusably perhaps, on the good time that is coming. I mean, to speak plain English, on her expectation of soon becoming a mother. No doubt it is very natural in her to feel as if no woman had ever been a mother before; but I could not help inditing an answer calculated to shake her up a bit. A day or two since I had another note from her, quite as good as usual, but I think a trifle nonplussed by the rather unceremonious fashion in which her terrors and the expected personage were handled. . . . It is useless to tell you how I live. I endure life; but whether I enjoy it or not is another question. However, I get on. The weather, I think, has not been very good lately; or else the beneficial effects of change of air and scene are evaporating. In spite of regular exercise the old headaches and starting, wakeful nights are coming upon me again. But I do get on, and have neither wish nor right to complain."

"October, 1851.

"I am not at all intending to go from home at present. I have just refused successively Miss Martineau, Mrs. Gaskell, and Mrs. Forster. I could not go if I would. One

person after another in the house has been ailing for the last month and more. First Tabby had the influenza, then Martha took it and is ill in bed now, and I grieve to say Papa too has taken cold. So far I keep pretty well, and am thankful for it, for who else would nurse them all! Some painful mental worry I have gone through this autumn; but there is no use in dwelling on all that. At present I seem to have some respite. I feel more disinclined than ever for letter-writing. . . . Life is a struggle."

"November, 1851.

"Papa, Tabby, and Martha are at present all better, but yet none of them well. Martha especially looks feeble. I wish she had a better constitution. As it is, one is always afraid of giving her too much to do; and yet there are many things I cannot undertake myself; and we do not like to change when we have had her so long. The other day I received the inclosed letter from Australia. I had had one before from the same quarter, which is still unanswered. I told you I did not expect to hear thence—nor did I. The letter is long, but it will be worth your while to read it. In its way it has merit—that cannot be denied—abundance of information, talent of a certain kind, alloyed (I think) here and there with errors of taste. This little man with all his long letters remains as much a conundrum to me as ever. Your account of the H—'domestic joys' amused me much. The good folks seem very happy; long may they continue so! It somewhat cheers me to know that such happiness *does* exist on earth."

"November, 1851.

"All here is pretty much as usual. . . . The only events of my life consist in that little change occasional letters bring. I have had two from Miss W— since she left Haworth, which touched me much. She seems to think so much of a little congenial company, a little attention and kindness. She says she has not for many days known such enjoyment as she experienced during the ten days she stayed here. Yet you know what Haworth is—dull enough. Before answering X—'s letter from Australia I got up my courage to write to — and beg him to give me an impartial account of X—'s character and disposition, owning that I was very much in the dark on these points and did not like to continue correspondence without further information. I got the answer which I inclose. Since receiving it I have replied to X— in a calm, civil manner. At the earliest I cannot hear from him again before the spring."

"December, 1851.

"I hope you have got on this last week well. It has been very trying here. Papa so far has borne it unhurt; but these winds and changes have given me a bad cold; however, I am better now than I was. Poor old Keeper

(Emily's dog) died last Monday morning after being ill one night. He went gently to sleep; we laid his old faithful head in the garden. Flossy is dull, and misses him. There was something very sad in losing the old dog; yet I am glad he met a natural fate. People kept hinting that he ought to be put away, which neither Papa nor I liked to think of. If I were near a town and could get cod-liver oil fresh and sweet, I really would most gladly take your advice and try it; but how I could possibly procure it at Haworth I do not see. . . You ask about the *Lily and the Bee*. If you have read it you have effected an exploit beyond me. I glanced at a few pages and laid it down hopeless, nor can I now find courage to resume it. But, then, I never liked Warren's writings. *Margaret Maitland* is a good book, I doubt not."

At this point the illness of which she makes light in these letters increased to such an extent as to alarm her father, and at last she consented to lay aside her work and allow herself the pleasure and comfort of a visit from her friend. The visit was a source of happiness whilst it lasted; but when it was over the depression returned, and there was a serious relapse. Something of her sufferings at this time—whilst *Villette* was still upon the stocks—will be gathered from the following letter, dated January, 1852:—

"I wish you could have seen the coolness with which I captured your letter on its way to Papa, and at once conjecturing its tenor, made the contents my own. Be quiet, Be tranquil. It is, dear Nell, my decided intention to come to B— for a few days when I can come; but of this last I must positively judge for myself, and I must take my time. I am better to-day—much better; but you can have little idea of the sort of condition into which mercury throws people to ask me to go from home anywhere in close or open carriage. And as to talking—four days ago I could not well have articulated three sentences. Yet I did not need nursing, and I kept out of bed. It was enough to burden myself; it would have been misery to me to have annoyed another."

"March, 1852.

"The news of E. T.'s death came to me last week in a letter from M—, a long letter, which wrung my heart so in its simple, strong, truthful emotion, I have only ventured to read it once. It ripped up half-scarred wounds with terrible force—the death-bed was just the same—breath failing, &c. She fears she will now in her dreary solitude become 'a stern, harsh, selfish woman.' This fear struck home. Again and again I have felt it for myself, and what is my position to M—'s? I should break

out in energetic wishes that she would return to England, if reason would permit me to believe that prosperity and happiness would there await her. But I see no such prospect. May God help her as God only can help!"

To another friend she writes as follows, in reply to an invitation to leave Haworth for a short visit:—

"March 12th, 1852.

"Your kind note holds out a strong temptation, but one that *must be resisted*. From home I must not go unless health or some cause equally imperative render a change necessary. For nearly four months now (*i.e.* since I first became ill) I have not put pen to paper; my work has been lying untouched and my faculties have been rusting for want of exercise; further relaxation is out of the question, and *I will not permit myself to think of it*. My publisher groans over my long delays; I am sometimes provoked to check the expression of his impatience with short and crusty answers. Yet the pleasure I now deny myself I would fain regard as only deferred. I heard something about your purposing to visit Scarborough in the course of the summer, and could I by the close of July or August bring my task to a certain point, how glad should I be to join you there for a while! . . . However, I dare not lay plans at this distance of time; for me so much must depend, first, on Papa's health (which throughout the winter has been, I am thankful to say, really excellent); and, second, on the progress of work—a matter not wholly contingent on wish or will, but lying in a great measure beyond the reach of effort, or out of the pale of calculation."

As the summer advanced her sufferings were scarcely abated, and at last, in search of some relief, she made a sudden visit by herself to Filey, inspired in part by her desire to see the memorial stone erected above her sister's grave at Scarborough.

"FILEY BAY, June, 1852.

"MY DEAR MISS —,

"Your kind and welcome note reached me at this place, where I have been staying three weeks *quite alone*. Change and sea-air had become necessary. Distance and other considerations forbade my accompanying Ellen to the south, much as I should have liked it had I felt quite free and unfettered. Ellen told me sometime ago that you were not likely to visit Scarborough till the autumn, so I forthwith packed my trunk and betook myself here. The first week or ten days I greatly feared the seaside would not suit me, for I suffered almost incessantly from headache and other harassing ailments; the weather, too, was dark, stormy, and excessively—*bitterly*—cold; my solitude under such circumstances partook

of the character of desolation; I had some dreary evening hours and night vigils. However, that passed. I think I am now better and stronger for the change, and in a day or two hope to return home. Ellen told me that Mr. W—— said people with my tendency to congestion of the liver should walk three or four hours every day; accordingly I have walked as much as I could since I came here, and look almost as sun-burnt and weather-beaten as a fisherman or a bathing-woman, with being out in the open air. As to my work, it has stood obstinately still for a long while: certainly a torpid liver makes a torpid brain. No spirit moves me. If this state of things does not entirely change my chance of a holiday in the autumn is not worth much; yet I should be very sorry not to meet you for a little while at Scarborough. The duty to be discharged at Scarborough was the chief motive that drew me to the east coast. I have been there, visited the churchyard, and seen the stone. There were five errors, consequently I had to give directions for its being refaced and relettered."

The sea-air did her good; but she was still unable to carry her great work forward, in spite of the urgent pressure put upon her by those who in this respect merely expressed the impatience of the public.

"HAWORTH, July, 1852.

"I am again at home, where (thank God) I found all well. I certainly feel much better than I did, and would fain trust that the improvement may prove permanent. . . . The first fortnight I was at Filey I had constantly recurring pain in the right side, and sick headache into the bargain. My spirits at the same time were cruelly depressed—prostrated some times. I feared the miseries and the suffering of last winter were all returning; consequently I am now indeed thankful to find myself so much better. . . . You ask about Australia. Let us dismiss the subject in a few words, and not recur to it. All is silent as the grave. Cornhill is silent too: there has been bitter disappointment there at my having no work ready for this season. Ellen, we must not rely upon our fellow-creatures—only on ourselves, and on Him who is above both us and them. My labours, as you call them, stand in abeyance and I cannot hurry them. I must take my own time, however long that time may be."

"August, 1852.

"I am thankful to say that papa's convalescence seems now to be quite confirmed. There is scarcely any remainder of the inflammation in his eyes, and his general health progresses satisfactorily. He begins even to look forward to resuming his duty ere long, but caution must be observed on that head. Martha has been very willing and helpful

during Papa's illness. Poor Tabby is ill herself at present with English cholera; which complaint, together with influenza, has lately been almost universally prevalent in this district. Of the last, I have myself had a touch; but it went off very gently on the whole, affecting my chest and liver less than any cold has done for the last three years. . . . I write to you about yourself rather under constraint and in the dark; for your letters, dear Nell, are most remarkably oracular, dropping nothing but hints which tie my tongue a good deal. What, for instance, can I say to your last post-script? It is quite sibylline. I can hardly guess what checks you in writing to me. Perhaps you think that as I generally write with some reserve, you ought to do the same. My reserve, however, has its origin not in design, but in necessity. I am silent because I have literally *nothing to say*. I might indeed repeat over and over again that my life is a pale blank, and often a very weary burden, and that the future sometimes appals me; but what end could be answered by such repetition, except to weary you and enervate myself? The evils that now and then wring a groan from my heart lie in my position—not that I am a *single* woman and likely to remain a *single* woman; but because I am a lonely woman and likely to be *lonely*. But it cannot be helped, and therefore *imperatively must be borne*, and borne too with as few words about it as may be. I write this just to prove to you that whatever you would freely say to me, you may just as freely write. Understand that I remain just as resolved as ever not to allow myself the holiday of a visit from you, till I have done my work. After labour, pleasure; but while work was lying at the wall undone, I never yet could enjoy recreation."

Slowly page after page of *Villette* was now being written. The reader sees from these letters that the book was composed in no happy mood. Writing to her publisher a few weeks after the date of the last letter printed above, she says, "I can hardly tell you how I hunger to hear some opinions beside my own, and how I have sometimes desponded and almost despaired, because there was no one to whom to read a line, or of whom to ask a counsel. *Jane Eyre* was not written under such circumstances, nor were two-thirds of *Shirley*. I got so miserable about it I could bear no allusion to the book. It is not finished yet; but now I hope." But though her work pressed so incessantly upon her, and her feverish anxiety to have it done weighed so heavily upon her health and spirits, she could still find time to answer her friend's

letters in a way which showed that her interest in the outer world was as keen as ever:—

"September, 1852.

"Thank you for A——'s notes. I like to read them, they are so full of news, but they are illegible. A great many words I really cannot make out. It is pleasing to hear that M—— is doing so well, and the tidings about ——— seem also good. I get a note from ——— every now and then, but I fear my last reply has not given much satisfaction. It contained a taste of that unpalatable commodity called *advice*—such advice, too, as might be and I dare say was, construed into faint reproof. I can scarcely tell what there is about ———, that, in spite of one's conviction of her amiability, in spite of one's sincere wish for her welfare, palls upon one, satiates, stirs impatience. She *will* complacently put forth opinions and tastes as her own which are *not* her own, nor in any sense natural to her. My patience can really hardly sustain the test of such a jay in borrowed plumes. She prated so much about the fine wilful spirit of her child, whom she describes as a hard, brown little thing, who will do nothing but what pleases himself, that I hit out at last—not very hard, but enough to make her think herself ill-used, I doubt not. Can't help it. She often says she is not 'absorbed in self,' but the fact is I have seldom seen anyone more unconsciously, thoroughly, and often weakly egotistic. Then, too, she is inconsistent. In the same breath she boasts her matrimonial happiness and whines for sympathy. Don't understand it. With a paragon of a husband and child, why that whining, craving note? Either her lot is not all she professes it to be, or she is hard to content."

In October the resolute determination to allow herself no relaxation until *Villette* was finished broke down. She was compelled to call for help, and to acknowledge herself beaten in her attempt to crush out the yearning for company:—

"October, 1852.

"Papa expresses so strong a wish that I should ask you to come, and I feel some little refreshment so absolutely necessary myself, that I really must beg you to come to Haworth for one single week. I thought I would persist in denying myself till I had done my work, but I find it won't do. The matter refuses to progress, and this excessive solitude presses too heavily. So let me see your dear face, Nell, just for one reviving week. Could you come on Wednesday? Write to-morrow and let me know by what train you would reach Keighley, that I may send for you."

The visit was a pleasant one in spite of the weariness of body and mind which

troubled Charlotte. She laid aside her task for that "one little week," went out upon the moors with her friend, talked as of old, and at last, when she was left alone once more, declared that the change had done her "inexpressible good." Her pen now began to move more quickly, and the closing chapters of *Villette* were written with comparative ease, so that at last she writes thus on November 22nd:—

"Monday Morning.

"Truly thankful am I to be able to tell you that I finished my long task on Saturday, packed and sent off the parcel to Cornhill. I said my prayers when I had done it. Whether it is well or ill done I don't know. *D.V.*, I will now try to wait the issue quietly. The book, I think, will not be considered pretentious, nor is it of a character to excite hostility. As Papa is pretty well, I may, I trust, dear Nell, do as you wish me and come for a few days to B—. Miss Martineau has also urgently asked me to go and see her. I promised if all were well to do so at the close of November or the commencement of December, so that I could go on from B— to Westmoreland. Would Wednesday suit you? *Esmond* shall come with me, i.e., Thackeray's novel."

Every reader knows in what fashion *Villette* ends, and most persons also know from Mrs. Gaskell that the reason why the actual issue is left in some uncertainty was the author's filial desire to gratify her father. Charlotte herself was firmly resolved that she would *not* make Lucy Snowe the happy wife of Paul Emanuel. She never meant to "appoint her lot in pleasant places." Lucy was to bear the storm and stress of life in the same manner as that in which her creator had been compelled to bear it; and she was to be left in the end alone, robbed for ever of the hope of spending the happy afternoon of her existence in the sunshine of love and congenial society. But Mr. Brontë, altogether unconscious of that tragedy of heart-sickness and soul-weariness which was being enacted under his own roof, and which furnished so striking a parallel to the story which ran through *Villette*, would not brook a gloomy ending to the tale, and by protestations and entreaties induced his daughter at least so far to alter her plan as to leave the issue in doubt.

So *Villette* went its way as *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley* had done before it, from the

secluded parsonage at Haworth up to the busy publishing-house in Cornhill, and thence out into the world. There was some fear on Charlotte's part when the MS. had been despatched. She herself was gradually forming that which remained the fixed conviction of her life—the conviction that in *Villette* she had done her best, and that, for good or for ill, by it her reputation must stand or fall. But she was intensely anxious, as we have seen, to have the opinions of others upon the story. Nor was it only a general verdict on its merits for which she called. She was uneasy upon some minor points. According to her wont, she had taken most of her characters from life, and it was not during her stay at Brussels alone that she had studied the models which she employed when writing the book. Naturally, she was curious to know whether she had painted her portraits too literally. So *Villette* was allowed to pass, whilst still in MS., into the hands of the original of "Dr. John." When that gentleman had read the story, and criticised all the characters with the freedom of unconsciousness, her mind was set at rest, and she knew that she had not transgressed the bounds which divide the storyteller from the biographer.

In the meantime, her work done, she hurried away from Haworth to spend a well-earned holiday at B— with her friend. *Esmond* accompanied her, and the quiet afternoons were spent in reading it aloud. On December 9th she writes from Haworth announcing her safe return to her own home:—

"I got home safely at five o'clock yesterday afternoon, and, I am most thankful to say, found Papa and all the rest quite well. I did my business satisfactorily in Leeds, getting the head-dress rearranged as I wished. It is now a very different matter to the bushy, tasteless thing it was before. On my arrival I found no proof-sheets, but a letter from Mr. S—, which I would have inclosed, but so many words are scarce legible you would have no pleasure in reading it. He continues to make a mystery of his 'reason'; something in the third volume sticks confoundedly in his throat, and as to the 'female character' about which I asked, he responds that 'she is an odd, fascinating little puss,' but affirms that 'he is not in love with her.' He tells me also that he will answer no more questions about *Villette*. This morning I have a brief

note from Mr. Williams, intimating that he has not yet been permitted to read the third volume. Also there is a note from Mrs. —, very kind. I almost wish I could still look on that kindness just as I used to do: it was very pleasant to me once. Write immediately, dear Nell, and tell me how your mother is. Give my kindest regards to her and all others at B—. Everybody seemed very good to me this last visit. I remember it with corresponding pleasure."

The private reception of *Villette* was not altogether that for which its author had hoped. Her publisher had objections to urge against certain features of the story, and those who saw the book in manuscript were not slow to express their own disapproval. It was evident that there was disappointment at Cornhill; and the proud spirit of Miss Brontë was keenly troubled. The letters in which she dwells on what was passing at that time need not be reproduced here; for their purport is sufficiently indicated by that which has just been given. But it is worth while to notice the scrupulous modesty with which she listened to all that was said by those who found fault; her careful anxiety to understand their objections, such as they were, and her perfect readiness to discuss every point raised with them. Of irritability under this criticism there is no trace, only a certain sadness and sorrow at the discovery that she had not succeeded in impressing others as she had hoped. Yet she is scarcely surprised at first that it is so. Had she not written years before, when *Shirley* was first produced, these words?—

"No matter, whether known or unknown, misjudged or the contrary, I am resolved not to write otherwise. I shall bend as my powers tend. The two human beings who understood me, and whom I understood, are gone. I have some that love me yet, and whom I love without expecting, or having a right to expect, that they shall perfectly understand me. I am satisfied, but I must have my own way in the matter of writing. . . . I am thankful to God who gave me the faculty; and it is for me a part of my religion to defend this gift and to profit by its possession."

So now she is not astonished at finding herself misunderstood. Nor is she angry. She is perfectly ready to explain her real meaning to those who have misjudged her, but she is resolute in abiding by what she

has written. The work wrung from her during those two years of pain and sorrow is not work which can be altered at will, to please another. Even to meet the entreaties of her father she had refused to do more than draw a veil over the catastrophe in which the plot ends, and she cannot introduce new incidents, or lay on new colours, because the little circle of critics sitting in judgment on her manuscript have pronounced it to be imperfect. "I fear they" (the readers) "must be satisfied with what is offered; my palette affords no brighter tints; were I to attempt to deepen the reds or burnish the yellows, I should but botch." Yet she admits that those who judge the book only from the outside have some reason to complain that it is not as other novels are:—

"You say that Lucy Snowe may be thought morbid and weak, unless the history of her life be more freely given. I consider that she is both morbid and weak at times; her character sets up no pretensions to unmixt strength, and anybody living her life would necessarily become morbid. It was no impetus of healthy feeling which urged her to the confessional, for instance; it was the semi-delirium of solitary grief and sickness. If, however, the book does not express all this there must be a great fault somewhere. I might explain away a few other points, but it would be too much like drawing a picture and then writing underneath the name of the object intended to be represented."

Happily the heart of the great reading world is bigger and truer as a whole than any part of it is. What those who read the manuscript of *Villette* failed to see at the first glance was seen instantly by the public when the book was placed in its hands. From critics of every school and degree, there came up a cry of wonder and admiration, as men saw out of what simple characters and commonplace incidents genius had evoked this striking work of literary art. Popular, perhaps, the book could scarcely hope to be in the vulgar acceptance of the word. The author had carefully avoided the "flowery and inviting" course of romance, and had written in silent obedience to the stern dictates of an inspiration which, as we have seen only came at intervals, leaving her between its visits cruelly depressed

and pained, but which when it came held her spell-bound and docile. Yet out of the dull record of humble woes, marked by no startling episodes, adorned by few of the flowers of poetry, she had created such a heart-history as remains to this day without a rival in the school of English fiction to which it belongs.

I bring together a batch of notes, not all addressed to the same person, which give her account of the reception and success of the book :—

"Feb. 11th, 1853.

"Excuse a very brief note, for I have time only to thank you for your last kind and welcome letter, and to say that, in obedience to your wishes, I send you by this day's post two reviews—the *Examiner* and the *Morning Advertiser*—which, perhaps, you will kindly return at your leisure. Ellen has a third—the *Literary Gazette*—which she will likewise send. The reception of the book has been favourable thus far—for which I am thankful—less, I trust, on my own account than for the sake of those few real friends who take so sincere an interest in my welfare as to be happy in my happiness."

"Feb. 15th.

"I am very glad to hear that you got home all right, and that you managed to execute your commissions in Leeds so satisfactorily. You do not say whether you remembered to order the Bishop's dessert; I shall know, however, by to-morrow morning. I got a budget of no less than seven papers yesterday and to-day. The import of all the notices is such as to make my heart swell with thankfulness to Him who takes note both of suffering and work and motives. Papa is pleased too. As to friends in general, I believe I can love them still without expecting them to take any large share in this sort of gratification. The longer I live, the more plainly I see that gentle must be the strain on fragile human nature. It will not bear much.

"I have heard from Mrs. Gaskell. Very kind, panegyrical, and so on. Mr. S— tells me he has ascertained that Miss Martineau did write the notice in the *Daily News*. J. T. offers to give me a regular blowing-up and setting-down for 5l., but I tell him the *Times* will probably let me have the same gratis."

"March 10th, 1853.

"I only got the *Guardian* newspaper yesterday morning, and have not yet seen either the *Critic* or *Sharpe's Magazine*. The *Guardian* does not wound me much. I see the motive, which, indeed, there is no attempt to disguise. Still I think it a choice little morsel for foes (Mr. — was the first to bring the news of the review to Papa), and a still choicer morsel for 'friends' who,—bless them!—while they would not perhaps positively do one an injury,

still take a dear delight in dashing with bitterness the too sweet cup of success. Is *Sharpe's* small article like a bit of sugar-candy, too, Ellen? or has it the proper wholesome worm-wood flavour? Of course I guess it will be like the *Guardian*. My 'dear friends' will weary of waiting for the *Times*. 'O Sisera! why tarry the wheels of thy chariot so long?'"

"March 22nd.

"Thank you for sending —'s notes. Though I have not attended to them lately, they always amuse me. I like to read them; one gets from them a clear enough idea of her sort of life. —'s attempts to improve his good partner's mind make me smile. I think it all right enough, and doubt not they are happy in their way; only the direction he gives his efforts seems of rather problematic wisdom. Algebra and optics! Why not enlarge her views by a little well-chosen general reading? However, they do right to amuse themselves in their own way. The rather dark view you seem inclined to take of the general opinion about *Villette* surprises me the less, as only the more unfavourable reviews seem to have come in your way. Some reports reach me of a different tendency; but no matter; time will show. As to the character of Lucy Snowe, my intention from the first was that she should not occupy the pedestal to which *Jane Eyre* was raised by some injudicious admirers. She is where I meant her to be, and where no charge of self-laudation can touch her."

XI.

Every book, as we know, has its secret history, hidden from the world which reads only the printed pages, but legible enough to the author, who sees something more than the words he has set down for every one to read. Thackeray tells us how, reading again one of his smaller stories, written at a sad period of his own life, he brought back all the scene amid which the little tale was composed, and woke again to a consciousness of the pangs which tore his heart when his pen was busy with the imaginary fortunes of the puppets he had placed upon the mimic stage. Between the lines he read quite a different story from that which was laid before the reader. I have tried to show how largely this was the case with Charlotte Brontë's novels. Each was a double romance, having one meaning for the world and another for the author. Yet she herself, when she wrote *Shirley* and *Villette*, had no conception of the strange blending of the secret currents of the two

books which was in store for her, or of the unexpected fate which was to befall the real heroine of her last work—to wit, herself.

I have told how fixed was her belief that "Lucy Snowe's" fate was to be a tragic one—a life the closing years of which were to be spent in loneliness and anguish, and amid the bitterness of withered hopes. Very few readers can have forgotten the closing passage of *Villette*, in which the catastrophe, though veiled, can be readily discovered:—

"The sun passes the equinox; the days shorten, the leaves grow sere; but—he is coming.

"Frosts appear at night; November has sent his fogs in advance; the wind takes its autumn moan; but—he is coming.

"The skies hang full and dark—a rack sails from the west; the clouds cast themselves into strange forms—arches and broad radiations; there rise resplendent mornings—glorious, royal, purple as a monarch in his state; the heavens are one flame; so wild are they, they rival battle at its thickest—so bloody, they shame Victory in her pride. I know some signs of the sky; I have noted them ever since childhood. God, watch that sail! Oh! guard it!

"The wind shifts to the west. Peace, peace, Banshee—'keening' at every window! It will rise—it will swell—it shrieks out long; wander as I may through the house this night, I cannot lull the blast. The advancing hours make it strong: by midnight, all sleepless watchers hear and fear a wild south-west storm. . . .

"Peace, be still! Oh! a thousand weepers, praying in agony on waiting shores, listened for that voice, but it was not uttered—not uttered till, when the hush came, some could not feel it; till, when the sun returned, his light was night to some!"

In darkness such as here is shadowed forth, Charlotte Brontë believed that her own life would close; all sunshine gone, all joys swept clean away by the bitter blast of death, all hopes withered or uprooted. But the end which she pictured was not to be. God was more merciful than her own imaginings; and at eventime there was light and peace upon her troubled path.

Those who turn to the closing passage of *Shirley* will find there reference to "a true Christian gentleman," who had taken the place of the hypocrite Malone, one of the famous three curates of the story.

This gentleman, a Mr. McCarthy, was, like the rest, no fictitious personage. His original was to be found in the person of Mr. Nicholls, who for several years had lived a simple, unobtrusive life at Haworth, as curate to Mr. Brontë, and whose name often occurs in Charlotte's letters to her friend. In none of these references to him is there the slightest indication that he was more than an honoured friend. Nor was it so. Whilst Mr. Nicholls, dwelling near Miss Brontë, and observing her far more closely than any other person could do, had formed a deep and abiding attachment for her, she herself was wholly unconscious of the fact. Its first revelation came upon her as something like a shock; as something also like a reproach. Whilst she had thought herself alone, doomed to a life of solitude and pain, a tender yet a manly love had all the while been growing round her.

It is obvious that the letters which she addressed at this time (December, 1852) to her friend cannot be printed here. Yet no letters more honourable to the woman, the daughter, and the lover have ever been penned. There is no restraint now in the outpourings of her heart. Her friend is taken into her full confidence, and every hope and fear and joy is spoken out as only women who are pure and truthful and entirely noble can venture to speak out. Mrs. Gaskell has briefly but distinctly stated the broad features of this strange love story, giving such promise at the time, so happy and beautiful in its brief fruition, so soon to be quenched in the great darkness. Mr. Brontë resented the attentions of Mr. Nicholls to his daughter in a manner which brought to light all the sternness and bitterness of his character. There had been of late years a certain mellowing of his disposition which Charlotte had dwelt upon with hopeful joy, as her one comfort in her lonely life at Haworth. How much he owed to her none knew but himself. When he was sinking under the burden of his son's death, she had rescued him; when, for one dark and bitter interval, he had sought refuge from grief and remorse in the coward's solace, her brave heart, her gentleness, her unyielding courage, had

brought him back again from evil ways, and sustained and kept him in the path of honour; and now his own ambitions were more than satisfied by her success; he found himself shining in the reflected glory of his daughter's fame, and sunned himself, poor man, in the light and warmth. But all the old jealousy, the intense acerbity of his character broke out when he saw another person step between himself and her, and that other no idol of the great world of London, but simply the honest man who had dwelt almost under his own roof-tree for years.

When, having heard with surprise and emotion, the story of Mr. Nicholls's attachment, Charlotte communicated his offer to her father, "agitation and anger disproportionate to the occasion ensued. My blood boiled with a sense of injustice. But Papa worked himself into a state not to be trifled with. The veins on his forehead started up like whipcord, and his eyes became suddenly bloodshot. I made haste to promise that on the morrow Mr. Nicholls should have a distinct refusal." It so happened that very soon after this, that is to say when *Villette* was published, Miss Martineau caused deep pain to its writer by condemning the manner in which "all the female characters in all their thoughts and lives" were represented as "being full of one thing—love." The critic not unjustly pointed out that love was not the be-all and the end-all of a woman's life. Perhaps her pen would not have been so sharp in touching on this subject, had she known with what quiet self-sacrifice the author of *Villette* had but a few weeks before set aside her own preferences and inclinations, and submitted her lot to her father's angry will. This truly must be reckoned as another illustration of the extent to which the *Quarterly Review* of 1848 had formed an accurate conception of the character of "Currer Bell."

Not only was the struggle which followed sharp and painful; it was also stubborn and prolonged. Mr. Nicholls resigned the curacy he had held so many years, and prepared to leave Haworth. Mr. Brontë not only showed no signs of relenting, but openly exulted in his depar-

ture, and lost no opportunity of expressing in bitterly sarcastic language his opinion of his colleague's conduct. How deeply Charlotte suffered at this time is proved by the letters before me. Firmly convinced that her first duty was to the parent whose only remaining stay she was, she never wavered in her determination to sacrifice every wish of her own to his comfort. But her heart was racked with pity for the man who was suffering through his love for her, and her indignation was roused to fever-heat by the gross injustice of her father's conduct.

"Compassion or relenting is no more to be looked for from Papa than sap from fire-wood. I never saw a battle more sternly fought with the feelings than Mr. N. fights with his, and when he yields momentarily, you are almost sickened by the sense of the strain upon him. However, he is to go and I cannot speak to him or look at him or comfort him a whit—and I must submit. Providence is over all; that is the only consolation."

"In all this," she says, after speaking again of the severity of the struggle, "it is not I who am to be pitied at all, and of course nobody pities me. They all think in Haworth that I have disdainfully refused him. If pity would do him any good he ought to have, and I believe has, it. They may abuse me if they will. Whether they do or not I can't tell."

During this crisis in her life, when suffering had come to her in a new and sharp form, but when happily the black cloud was lit up on the other side by the rays of the sun, she went up to London to spend a few weeks. From the letters written during her visit I make these extracts:—

"Jan. 11th, 1853.

"I came here last Wednesday. I had a delightful day for my journey, and was kindly received at the close. My time has passed pleasantly enough since I came, yet I have not much to tell you; nor is it likely I shall have. I do not mean to go out much or see many people. Sir J. S. wrote to me two or three times before I left home, and made me promise to let him know when I should be in town, but I reserve to myself the right of deferring the communication till the latter part of my stay. All in this house appear to be pretty much as usual, and yet I see some changes. Mrs. — and her daughter look well enough; but on Mr. — hard work is telling early. Both his complexion, his countenance, and the very lines of his features are altered. It is rather the remembrance of what he was

than the fact of what he is which can warrant the picture I have been accustomed to give of him. One feels pained to see a physical alteration of this kind; yet I feel glad and thankful that it is *merely* physical. As far as I can judge, mind and manners have undergone no deterioration—rather, I think, the contrary.”

“Jan. 19th, 1853.

“I still continue to get on very comfortably and quietly in London, in the way I like, seeing rather things than persons. Being allowed to have my own choice of sights this time, I selected the *real* rather than the *decorative* side of life. I have been over two prisons, ancient and modern, Newgate and Pentonville; also the Bank, the Exchange, the Foundling Hospital; and to-day, if all be well, I go with Dr. Forbes to see the Bethlehem Hospital. Mrs. — and her daughters are, I believe, a little amazed at my gloomy tastes; but I take no notice. Papa, I am glad to say, continues well. I inclose portions of two notes of his which will show you better than anything I can say how he treats a certain subject. My book is to appear at the close of this month. Mrs. Gaskell wrote to beg that it should not clash with *Ruth*, and it was impossible to refuse to defer the publication a week or two.”

The visit to London did good; but it could not remove the pain which she suffered during this period of conflict. The remainder of the year 1853 was a chequered one. Mr. Nicholls left Haworth; Charlotte remained with her father. Those who saw her at this time bear testimony to the unflinching, never-flagging devotion she displayed towards one who was wounding her cruelly. But she bore this sorrow, like those which had preceded it, bravely and cheerfully. To her friend she opened her heart at times, revealing something of what she was suffering; but to all others she was silent.

“HAWORTH, April 13th, 1853.

“MY DEAR MISS —,

“Your last kind letter ought to have been answered long since, and would have been, did I find it practicable to proportion the promptitude of the response to the value I place upon my correspondents and their communications. You will easily understand, however, that the contrary rule often holds good, and that the epistle which importunes often takes precedence of that which interests. My publishers express entire satisfaction with the reception which has been accorded to *Villette*. And, indeed, the majority of the reviews has been favourable enough. You will be aware, however, that there is a minority, small in character, which views the work with no

favourable eye. Currer Bell's remarks on Romanism have drawn down on him the con-
dign displeasure of the High Church party, which displeasure has been unequivocally expressed through their principal organs, the *Guardian*, the *English Churchman*, and the *Christian Remembrancer*. I can well understand that some of the charges launched against me by these publications will tell heavily to my prejudice in the minds of most readers. But this must be borne; and for my part, I can suffer no accusation to oppress me much which is not supported by the inward evidence of Conscience and Reason. ‘Extremes meet,’ says the proverb; in proof whereof I would mention that Miss Martineau finds with *Villette* nearly the same fault as the Puseyites. She accuses me of attacking Popery ‘with virulence,’ of going out of my way to assault it ‘passionately.’ In other respects she has shown, with reference to the work, a spirit so strangely and unexpectedly acrimonious, that I have gathered courage to tell her that the gulf of mutual difference between her and me is so wide and deep, the bridge of union so slight and uncertain, I have come to the conclusion that frequent intercourse would be most perilous and unadvisable, and have begged to adjourn *sine die* my long-projected visit to her. Of course she is now very angry; but it cannot be helped. Two or three weeks since I received a long and kind letter from Mr. —, which I answered a short time ago. I believe he thinks me a much better advocate for *change*, and what is called ‘political progress’ than I am. However, in my reply, I did not touch on these subjects. He intimated a wish to publish some of his own MSS. I fear he would hardly like the somewhat dissuasive tendency of my answer; but really, in these days of headlong competition, it is a great risk to publish.”

“April 18th, 1853.

“If all be well, I think of going to Manchester about the close of this week. I only intend staying a few days; but I can say nothing about coming back by B—. Do not expect me; I would rather see you at Haworth by and by. Two or three weeks since Miss Martineau wrote to ask why she did not hear from me, and to press me to go to Ambleside. Explanations ensued; the notes on each side were quite civil; but having deliberately formed my resolution on substantial grounds, I adhered to it. I have declined being her visitor, and bid her good-bye. It is best so; the antagonism of our natures and principles was too serious to be trifled with.”

This difference with Miss Martineau is not a thing to dwell on now. The pity is that two women so truthful, so sincere, so bold in their utterances should ever have differed. Charlotte Brontë had known how to stand bravely by Miss Martineau

when she believed that the latter was suffering because of her honestly-formed opinions; she had known how to speak on her behalf with timely generosity and force. But her sensitive nature was wounded to the quick by criticisms which she believed to be unjust, and so these two great women parted, and met again no more.

To the mental pain which she was now suffering from her father's conduct there was added keen physical torture. During this summer of 1853 many of her letters contain sentences like this:—"I have been suffering most severely for ten days with continued pain in the head—on the nerves it is said to be. Blistering at last seems to have done it some good; but I am yet weak and bewildered." A visit from Mrs. Gaskell, who came to see how Haworth looked in its autumn robe of splendour, did her some good; but still more was gained by a journey to the seaside in the company of her old friend and schoolmistress, Miss Wooler.

December came, and she writes to this friend expressing her wonder as to how she is spending the long winter evenings—"alone probably like me." It was a dreary winter for her; but the spring was at hand. Mr. Brontë, studying his daughter with keen eyes, could not hide from himself the fact that her health and spirits were drooping now as they had never drooped before. All work with the pen was laid aside; and household cares, attendance upon her father or on the old servant who now also needed to be waited upon, occupied her time; but her heart was heavy with a burden such as she had never known before. At last the stern nature of the man was broken down by his genuine affection for his daughter. His opposition to her marriage was suddenly laid aside; he asked her to recall Mr. Nicholls to Haworth, and with characteristic waywardness he now became as anxious that the wedding should take place as he had ever been that it should be prevented.

"April 11th, 1854.

"The result of Mr. Nicholls's visit is that Papa's consent is gained and his respect won; for Mr. Nicholls has in all things proved himself disinterested and forbearing. He has

shown, too, that while his feelings are exquisitely keen he can freely forgive . . . In fact, dear Ellen, I am engaged. Mr. Nicholls in the course of a few months will return to the curacy of Haworth. I stipulated that I would not leave Papa, and to Papa himself I proposed a plan of residence which should maintain his seclusion and convenience uninvaded, and in a pecuniary sense bring him gain instead of loss. What seemed at one time impossible is now arranged, and Papa begins really to take a pleasure in the prospect. For myself, dear E—, while thankful to One who seems to have guided me through much difficulty, much and deep distress and perplexity of mind, I am still very calm. . . . What I taste of happiness is of the soberest order. Providence offers me this destiny. Doubtless, then, it is the best for me; nor do I shrink from wishing these dear to me one not less happy. It is possible that our marriage may take place in the course of the summer. Mr. Nicholls wishes it to be in July. He spoke of you with great kindness, and said he hoped you would be at our wedding. I said I thought of having no other bridesmaid. Did I say right? I mean the marriage to be literally *as quiet as possible*. Do not mention these things as yet. Good-bye. There is a strange, half-sad feeling in making these announcements. The whole thing is something other than the imagination paints it beforehand: cares, fears, come mixed inextricably with hopes. I trust yet to talk the matter over with you."

So at length the day had dawned, and every letter now is filled with the hopes and cares of the expectant bride.

"April 15th.

"I hope to see you somewhere about the second week in May. The Manchester visit is still hanging over my head, I have deferred it and deferred it; but have finally promised to go about the beginning of next month. I shall only stay about three days; then I spend two or three days at H., then come to B. The three visits must be compressed into the space of a fortnight if possible. I suppose I shall have to go to Leeds. My purchases cannot be either expensive or extensive. You must just resolve in your head the bonnets and dresses: something that can be turned to decent use and worn after the wedding-day will be best—I think. I wrote immediately to Miss W—, and received a truly kind letter from her this morning. Papa's mind seems wholly changed about this matter; and he has said, both to me and when I was not there, how much happier he feels since he allowed all to be settled. It is a wonderful relief for me to hear him treat the thing rationally—and quietly and amicably to talk over with him themes on which once I dared not touch. He is rather anxious that things should get forward now, and takes

quite an interest in the arrangement of preliminaries. His health improves daily, though this east wind still keeps up a slight irritation in the throat and chest. The feeling which had been disappointed in Papa was *ambition*—paternal pride—ever a restless feeling, as we all know. Now that this unquiet spirit is exorcised, justice, which was once quite forgotten, is once more listened to, and affection, I hope, resumes some power. My hope is that in the end this arrangement will turn out more truly to Papa's advantage than any other it was in my power to achieve. Mr. N. only in his last letter refers touchingly to his earnest desire to prove his gratitude to Papa by offering support and consolation to his declining age. This will not be mere *talk* with him. He is no talker; no dealer in mere professions."

"April 28th.

"Papa, thank God! continues to improve much. He preached twice on Sunday and again on Wednesday, and was not tired. His mind and mood are different to what they were; so much more cheerful and quiet. I trust the illusions of ambition are quite dissipated, and that he really sees it is better to relieve a suffering and faithful heart, to secure in its fidelity a solid good, than unfeelingly to abandon one who is truly attached to his interests as well as mine, and pursue some vain empty shadow."

The marriage took place on June 29th, 1854. A neighbouring clergyman read the service; Charlotte's "dear Nell" was the solitary bridesmaid; her old schoolmistress, whose friendship had ever been dear to her, Miss Wooler, gave her away, and visitors to Haworth who are shown the marriage register, will see that these two faithful and trusted friends were the only witnesses. Immediately after the marriage the bride and bridegroom started for Ireland to visit some of the relatives of Mr. Nicholls. "I trust I feel thankful to God for having enabled me to make a right choice, and I pray to be enabled to repay as I ought the affectionate devotion of a truthful, honourable, unboastful man," are words which appear in the first letter written from Ireland. A month later the bride writes as follows to her friend:—

"DUBLIN, July 28th, 1854.

"I really cannot rest any longer without writing you a line, which I have literally not had time to do during the last fortnight. We have been travelling about, with only just such cessation as enabled me to answer a few of the many notes of congratulation forwarded, and which I dared not suffer to accumulate

till my return, when I know I shall be busy enough. We have been to Killarney, Glen Gariffe, Tarbert, Tralee, Cork, and are now once more in Dublin again on our way home, where we hope to arrive next week. I shall make no effort to describe the scenery through which we have passed. Some parts have exceeded all I ever imagined. Of course much pleasure has sprung from all this, and more perhaps from the kind and ceaseless protection which has ever surrounded me, and made travelling a different matter to me from what it has heretofore been. Dear Nell, it is written that there shall be no unmixed happiness in this world. Papa has not been well, and I have been longing, *longing intensely* sometimes, to be at home. Indeed, I could enjoy and rest no more, and so home we are going."

It was a new life to which she was returning. Wedded to one who had proved by years of faithfulness and patience how strong and real was his love for her, it seemed as though peace and sunshine, the brightness of affection and the pleasures of home, were at length about to settle upon her and around her. The bare sitting-room in the parsonage, which for six years of loneliness and anguish had been peopled only by the heart-sick woman and the memories of those who had left her, once more resounded with the voices of the living. The husband's strong and upright nature furnished something for the wife to lean against; the painful sense of isolation which had so long oppressed her vanished utterly, and in its place came that "sweet sense of depending" which is the most blessed fruit of a trustful love. A great calm seemed to be breathed over the spirit of her life after the fitful fever which had raged so long, and her friends saw new shoots of tenderness, new blossoms of gentleness and affection, peeping forth in nooks of her character which had hitherto been barren. Of her letters during these happy months of peace and expectation I cannot quote much: they are too closely intertwined with the life of those who survive to permit of this being done; but all of them breathe the same spirit. They show that the courage, the patience, the cheerfulness with which the rude buffetings of fate had been borne in that stormy middle-passage of her history, had brought their own reward; and that joy had come at last, not perhaps in

the shape she had imagined in her early youth, but as a substantial reality, and no longer a mocking illusion.

"August 9th, 1854.

"— will probably end by accepting ; and judging from what you say, it seems to me that it would be rational to do so. If, indeed, some one else whom she preferred wished to have her, and had duly and sincerely come forward, matters would be different. But this it appears is not the case; and to cherish any *unguarded* and *unsustained* preference is neither right nor wise. Since I came home I have not had one unemployed moment. My life is changed indeed; to be wanted continually, to be constantly called for and occupied, seems so strange: yet it is a marvellously good thing. As yet I don't quite understand how some wives grow so selfish. As far as my experience of matrimony goes, I think it tends to draw you out and away from yourself. . . . Dear Nell, during the last six weeks the colour of my thoughts is a good deal changed. I know more of the realities of life than I once did. I think many false ideas are propagated, perhaps unintentionally. I think those married women who indiscriminately urge their acquaintance to marry, much to blame. For my part, I can only say with deeper sincerity and fuller significance, what I always said in theory—Wait God's will. Indeed, indeed, Nell, it is a solemn, and strange, and perilous thing for a woman to become a wife. Man's lot is far, far different. . . . Have I told you how much better Mr. Nicholls is? He looks quite strong and hale. To see this improvement in him has been a great source of happiness to me; and, to speak truth, a source of wonder too."

"HAWORTH, September 7th, 1854.

"I send a French paper to-day. You would almost think I had given them up, it is so long since one was despatched. The fact is they had accumulated to quite a pile during my absence. I wished to look them over before sending them off, and as yet I have scarcely found time. That same *Time* is an article of which I once had a large stock always on hand; where it is all gone to now it would be difficult to say, but my moments are very fully occupied. Take warning, Ellen. The married woman can call but a very small portion of each day her own. Not that I complain of this sort of monopoly as yet, and I hope I never shall incline to regard it as a misfortune, but it certainly exists. We were both disappointed that you could not come on the day I mentioned. I have grudged this splendid weather very much. The moors are in their glory; I never saw them fuller of purple bloom; I wanted you to see them at their best. They are fast turning now, and in another week, I fear, will be faded and sere. As soon as ever you can leave home, be sure to write and let me know. . . . Papa con-

tinues greatly better. My husband flourishes; he begins indeed to express some slight alarm at the growing improvement in his condition. I think I am decent—better certainly than I was two months ago; but people don't compliment me as they do Arthur—excuse the name; it has grown natural to use it now."

"HAWORTH, September 16th, 1854.

"MY DEAR MISS —

"You kindly tell me not to write while Ellen is with me; I am expecting her this week; and as I think it would be wrong, long to defer answering a letter like yours, I will reduce to practice the maxim, 'there is no time like the present,' and do it at once. It grieves me that you should have had any anxiety about my health; the cough left me before I quitted Ireland, and since my return home I have scarcely had an ailment, except occasional headaches. My dear father, too, continues much better. Dr. B— was here on Sunday preaching a sermon for the Jews, and he gratified me much by saying that he thought Papa not at all altered since he saw him last—nearly a year ago. I am afraid this opinion is rather flattering; but still it gave me pleasure, for I had feared that he looked undeniably thinner and older. You ask what visitors we have had. A good many amongst the clergy, &c., in the neighbourhood, but none of note from a distance. Haworth is, as you say, a very quiet place; it is also difficult of access, and unless under the stimulus of necessity, or that of strong curiosity, or finally that of true and tried friendship, few take courage to penetrate to so remote a nook. Besides, now that I am married, I do not expect to be an object of much general interest. Ladies who have won some prominence (call it either *notoriety* or *celebrity*) in their single life, often fall quite into the background when they change their names. But if true domestic happiness replace fame, the change is, indeed, for the better. Yes, I am thankful to say that my husband is in improved health and spirits. It makes me content and grateful to hear him, from time to time, avow his happiness in the brief but plain phrase of sincerity. My own life is more occupied than it used to be; I have not so much time for thinking: I am obliged to be more practical, for my dear Arthur is a very practical as well as a very punctual, methodical man. Every morning he is in the national school by nine o'clock; he gives the children religious instruction till half past ten. Almost every afternoon he pays visits amongst the poor parishioners. Of course he often finds a little work for his wife to do, and I hope she is not sorry to help him. I believe it is not bad for me that his bent should be so wholly towards matters of real life and active usefulness—so little inclined to the literary and contemplative. As to his continued affection and kind attentions, it does not become me to say much of them; but as yet they neither change nor diminish. I wish,

my dear Miss —, you had some kind, faithful companion to enliven your solitude at R—, some friend to whom to communicate your pleasure in the scenery, the fine weather, the pleasant walks. You never complain, never murmur, never seem otherwise than thankful; but I know you must miss a privilege none could more keenly appreciate than yourself."

There are other letters like the foregoing, all speaking of the constant occupation of time which once hung heavily, all giving evidence that peace and love had made their home in her heart, all free from that strain of sadness which was so common in other years. One only of these letters, that written on the morrow of her last Christmas Day, need be quoted, however:—

"HAWORTH, December 26th.

"I return Mrs. —'s letter: it is as you say, very genuine, truthful, affectionate, maternal, without a taint of sham or exaggeration. She will love her child without spoiling it, I think. She does not make an uproar about her happiness either. The longer I live the more I suspect exaggerations. I fancy it is sometimes a sort of fashion for each to vie with the other in protestations about their wondrous felicity—and sometimes they *fib*! I am truly glad to hear you are all better at B—. In the course of three or four weeks, now, I expect to get leave to come to you. I certainly long to see you again. One circumstance reconciles me to this delay—the weather. I do not know whether it has been as bad with you as with us; but here for three weeks we have had little else than a succession of hurricanes . . . You inquire after Mrs. Gaskell. She has not been here, and I think I should not like her to come now till summer. She is very busy now with her story of *North and South*. I must make this note very short. Arthur joins me in sincere good wishes for a happy Christmas and many of them to you and yours. He is well, thank God, and so am I; and he is 'my dear boy' certainly—dearer now than he was six months ago. In three days we shall actually have been married that length of time."

There was not much time for literary labours during these happy months of married life. The wife, new to her duties, was engaged in mastering them with all the patience, self-suppression, and industry which had characterised her throughout her life. Her husband was now her first thought; and he took the time which had formerly been devoted to reading, study, thought, and writing. But occasionally the pressure

she was forced to put upon herself was very severe. Mr. Nicholls had never been attracted towards her by her literary fame; with literary effort, indeed, he had no sympathy, and upon the whole he would rather that his wife should lay aside her pen entirely than that she should gain any fresh triumphs in the world of letters. So she submitted, and with cheerful courage repressed that "gift" which had been her solace in sorrows deep and many. Yet once "the spell" was too strong to be resisted, and she hastily wrote a few pages of a new story called *Emma*, in which once more she proposed to deal with her favourite theme—the history of a friendless girl. One would fain have seen how she would have treated her subject, now that "the colour of her thoughts" had been changed, and that a happy marriage had introduced her to a new phase of that life which she had studied so closely and so constantly.

But it was not to be. On January 19, when she had returned to Haworth, after a short visit to Sir J. K. Shuttleworth's, she wrote to her friend saying that her health had been very good ever since her return from Ireland till about ten days before, when a sudden change had taken place, and continual attacks of faintness and sickness had set in. Those around her were not alarmed at first. They hoped that before long all would be well with her again; they could not believe that the joys of which she had just begun to taste were about to be snatched away. But her weakness grew apace; the sickness knew no abatement; and a deadly fear began to creep into the hearts of husband and father. She was soon so weak that she was compelled to remain in bed, and from that "dreary bed" she wrote two or three faint pencil notes which still exist—the last pathetic chapters in that life-long correspondence from which we have gathered so many extracts. In one of them, which Mrs. Gaskell has published, she says:—"I want to give you an assurance which I know will comfort you—and that is that I find in my husband the tenderest nurse, the kindest support, the best earthly comfort, that ever woman had. His patience never

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fails, and it is tried by sad days and broken nights." In another, the last, she says: "I cannot talk—even to my dear, patient, constant Arthur I can say but few words at once." One dreary March morning, when frosts still bound the earth and no spring sun had come to gladden the hearts of those who watched for summer, her friend received another letter, written, not in the neat, minute hand of Charlotte Brontë, but in her father's tremulous characters:—

"HAWORTH, near KEIGHLEY,
March 30th, 1855.

"MY DEAR MADAM,

"We are all in great trouble, and Mr. Nicholls so much so that he is not sufficiently strong and composed to be able to write. I therefore devote a few lines to tell you that my dear daughter is very ill, and apparently on the verge of the grave. If she could speak she would no doubt dictate to us whilst answering your kind letter. But we are left to ourselves to give what answer we can. The doctors have no hope of her case, and fondly as we a long time cherished hope, that hope is now gone, and we have only to look forward to the solemn event with prayer to God that He will give us grace and strength sufficient unto our day.

"Ever truly and respectfully yours,

"P. BRONTË."

The following day, March 31st, 1855, the blinds were drawn once again at Haworth Parsonage; the last and greatest of the children of the house had passed away; and the brilliant name of Charlotte Brontë had become a name and nothing more! "We are left to ourselves," said Mr. Brontë in the letter I have just quoted—and so it was. Not the glory only, but the light, had fled from the parsonage where the childless father and the widowed husband sat together beside their dead. Of all the drear and desolate spots upon that wild Yorkshire moorland there was none now so dreary and so desolate as the house which had once been the home of Charlotte Brontë.

XII.

No apology need be offered for any single feature of Charlotte Brontë's life or character. She was what God made her in the furnace of sore afflictions and yet

more sore temptations; her life, instinct with its extraordinary individuality, was notwithstanding always subject to exterior influences, for the existence of which she was not responsible, and which more than once threatened to change the whole nature and purpose of her being; her genius, which brought forth its first-fruits under the cold shade of obscurity and adversity, was developed far more largely by sorrow, loneliness, and pain, than by the success which she gained in so abundant a degree. There are features of her character which we can scarcely comprehend, for the existence of which we are unable to account; and there are features of her genius which jar upon our sympathies and ruffle our conventional ideas; but for neither will one word of apology or excuse be offered by any who really know and love this great woman.

The fashion which exalted her to such a pinnacle of fame, like many another fashion, has lost its vitality; and the present generation, wrapped in admiration of another school of fiction, has consigned the works of Currer Bell to a premature sepulchre. But her friends need not despair; for from that dreary tomb of neglect an hour of resurrection must come, and the woman who has given us three of the most masterful books of the century, will again assert her true position in the literature of her country. We hear nothing now of the "immorality" of her writings. Younger people, if they turn from the sparkling or didactic pages of the most popular of recent stories to *Jane Eyre*, or *Villette*, in the hope of finding there some stimulant which may have power to tickle their jaded palates, will search in vain for anything that even borders upon impropriety—as we understand the word in these enlightened days—and they will form a queer conception of the generation of critics which denounced Currer Bell as the writer of immoral works of fiction. But it is said that there is coarseness in her stories "otherwise so entirely noble." Even Mrs. Gaskell has assented to the charge; and it is generally believed that Charlotte Brontë, as a writer, though not immoral in tone, was rude in language and coarse

in thought. The truth, however, is, that this so-called coarseness is nothing more than the simplicity and purity, the straightforwardness and unconsciousness which an unspotted heart naturally displays in dealing with those great problems of life which, alas! none who have drunk deep of the waters of good and evil can ever handle with entire freedom from embarrassment. An American writer¹ has spoken of Charlotte Brontë as "the great pre-Raphaelite among women, who was not ashamed or afraid to utter what God had shown her, and was too single-hearted of aim to swerve one hairbreadth in duplicating nature's outlines." She was more than this, however. She was bold enough to set up a standard of right of her own; and when still the unknown daughter of the humble Yorkshire parson, she could stir the hearts of readers throughout the world with the trumpet-note of such a declaration as this:—"Conventionality is not morality; self-righteousness is not religion; to pluck the mask from the face of the Pharisee is not to lift an impious hand to the Crown of Thorns." Let it be remembered that these words were written nearly thirty years ago, when conventionalism was still a potent influence in checking the free utterance of our inmost opinions; and let us be thankful that in that heroic band to whom we owe the emancipation of English thought, a woman holds an honourable place.

Writing of her life just after it had closed, her friend Miss Martineau said of her—"In her vocation she had, in addition to the deep intuitions of a gifted woman, the strength of a man, the patience of a hero, and the conscientiousness of a saint." Those who know her best will apply to her personal character the epithets which Miss Martineau reserved for her career as an author. It has been my object in these pages to supplement the picture painted in Mrs. Gaskell's admirable biography by the addition of one or two features, slight in themselves, perhaps, and yet not unimportant when the effect of the whole as a

¹ Harper's *New Monthly Magazine*, February 1866.

faithful portrait is considered. Charlotte Brontë was not naturally a morbid person; in youth she was happy and high-spirited; and up to the last moment of her life she had a serene strength and cheerfulness which seldom deserted her, except when acute physical suffering was added to her mental pangs. If her mind could have been freed from the depressing influences exerted on it by her frail and suffering body, it would have been one of the healthiest and most equable minds of our age. As it was, it showed itself able to meet the rude buffetings of fate without shrinking and without bravado; and the woman who is to this day regarded by the world at large as a marvel of self-conscious genius and of unchecked morbidness, was able to her dying hour to take the keenest, liveliest interest in the welfare of her friends, to pour out all her sympathy wherever she believed that it was needed and deserved, and to lighten the grim parsonage at Haworth by a presence which, in the sacred recesses of her home, was bright and cheerful, as well as steadfast and calm.

"Do not under-rate her oddity," said a gifted friend who knew her during her heyday of fame, while these pages were being written. Her oddity, it must be owned was extreme—so far as the world could judge. But I have striven to show how much this eccentricity was outward and superficial only, due in part to the peculiar conditions of her early life, but chiefly to the excessive shyness in the presence of strangers which she shared with her sisters. At heart, as some of these letters will show, she was one of the truest women who ever breathed; and her own heart-history was by no means so exceptional, so far removed from the heart-history of most women, as the public believes.

The key to her character was simple and unfinching devotion to duty. Once she failed, or, rather, once she allowed inclination to blind her as to the true direction of the path of duty, and that single failure coloured the whole of her subsequent life. But her own condemnation of herself was more sharp and bitter than any which could have been passed

upon her by the world, and from that one venial error she drew lessons which enabled her henceforward to live with a steady, constant power of self-sacrifice at her command such as distinguishes saints and heroes rather than ordinary men and women. Hot, impulsive, and tenacious in her affections, she suffered those whom she loved the most dearly to be torn from her without losing faith in herself or in God; tenderly sensitive as to the treatment which her friends received, she repaid the cruelty and injustice of her father towards the man whose heart she had won, by a depth of devotion and self-sacrifice which can only be fully estimated by those who know under what bitter conditions it was lavished upon an unworthy parent; bound, as all the children of genius are, by the spell of her own imagination, she was yet able during the closing months of her life to lay aside her pen, and give herself up wholly, at the desire of her husband, to those parish duties which had such slight attractions for her. Those who, knowing these facts, still venture to assert that the virtues which distinguished Currer Bell the author were lacking in Charlotte Brontë the woman, must have minds warped by deep-rooted and unworthy prejudices.

I have expressed my conviction that the comparative neglect from which *Jane Eyre* and its sister-works now suffer is only temporary. It is true that in some respects these books are not attractive. Though they are written with a terse vigour which must make them grateful to all whose palates are cloyed by the pretty writing of the present generation, they undoubtedly err on the side of a lack of literary polish. And though the portraits presented to us in their pages are wonderful as works of art, unsurpassed as studies of character, the range of the artist is a limited one, and for the most part the subjects chosen are not the most pleasing that could have been conceived. Yet one great and striking merit belongs to this masterly painter of men and women, which is lacking in some who, treading to a certain extent in her footsteps, have achieved even a wider and more brilliant reputation. There is no taint of the

dissecting-room about her books; we are never invited to admire the supreme cleverness of the operator who with unsparing knife lays bare before us the whole cunning mechanism of the soul which is stretched under the scalpel; nor are we bidden to pause and listen to those didactic moralisings which belong rather to the preacher or the lecturer than the novelist. It is the artist, not the anatomist who is instructing us; and after all we may derive a more accurate knowledge of men and women as they are from the cartoons of a Raphael than from the most elaborate diagrams or sections of the most eminent of physiologists.

Perhaps no merit is more conspicuous in Charlotte Brontë's writings than their unswerving honesty. Writing always "under the spell," at the dictation as it were of an invisible and superior spirit, she would never write save when "the fit was upon her" and she had something to say. "I have been silent lately because I have accumulated nothing since I wrote last," is a phrase which fell from her on one occasion. Save when she believed that she had accumulated something, some truth which she was bound to convey to the world, she would not touch her pen. She had every temptation to write fast and freely. Money was needed at home, and money was to be had by the mere production of novels which, whether good, bad, or indifferent, were certain to sell. But she withstood the temptation bravely, withstood it even when it came strengthened by the supplications of her friends, and from first to last she gave the world nothing but her best. This honesty—rare enough unfortunately among those whose painful lot it is to coin their brains into money—was carried far beyond these limits. When in writing she found that any character had escaped from her hands—and every writer of fiction knows how easily this may happen—she made no attempt to finish the portrait according to the canons of literary art. She waited patiently for fresh light; studying deeply in her waking hours, dreaming constantly of her task during her uneasy slumbers, until perchance the light she needed came and she could go on. But if it came not

she never pretended to supply the place of this inspiration of genius by any clever trick of literary workmanship. The picture was left unfinished—perfect so far as it went, but broken off at the point at which the author's keen intuitions had failed or fled from her. Nor when her work was done would she consent to alter or amend at the bidding of others; for the sake of no applause, of no success, would she change the fate of any of her characters as they had been fixed in the crucible of her genius. Even when her father exerted all his authority to secure another ending to the tale of *Villette*, he could only, as we have seen, persuade his daughter to veil the catastrophe. The hero was doomed; and Charlotte, whatever might be her own inclination, could not save him from his fate. Books so true, so honest, so simple, so thorough, as these, depend for their ultimate fate upon no transitions of fashion, no caprices of the public taste. They will hold their own as the slow-born fruits of a great genius, long after the productions of a score of facile pens now able to secure the world's

attention have been utterly forgotten. The daring and passion of *Jane Eyre*, the broad human sympathies, sparkling humour, and graphic portraiture of *Shirley*, and the steady, patient, unsurpassed concentration of power which distinguishes *Villette*, can hardly cease to command admiration whilst the literature of this century is remembered and studied.

But when we turn from the author to the woman, from the written pages to the writer, and when, forgetting the features and fortunes of those who appear in the romances of Currer Bell, we recall that touching story which will for ever be associated with Haworth Parsonage and with the great family of the Brontës, we see that the artist is greater than her works, that the woman is nobler and purer than the writer, and that by her life, even more than by her labours, the author of *Jane Eyre* must always teach us those lessons of courage, self-sacrifice, and patient endurance of which our poor humanity stands in such pressing and constant need.

T. WEMYSS REID.

Concluded.

MADCAP VIOLET.

CHAPTER XL.

UNINVITED GUESTS.

THERE are moments of agonised thinking that shorten one's life by years. Mrs. Warrener would have appealed to her brother to come to her aid to put in order the wild suggestions that his words had conjured up, to resolve the terrible doubts which now flashed in upon her; but he lay there silent and exhausted, that scene of excitement having obviously been too much for the feeble energies of an invalid. She was left to face the situation alone.

"Mamma, is it possible—do you think it possible, Violet can be alive?" said her daughter, whose face was as pale as her own.

"Child, child! how can I tell?" the mother replied in a bewildered way.

There were the flowers on the table, and the rudely-written message, but it was the interpretation given to them that was the strange and terrible thing, like some dream-warning come true, or the vision seen by a dying man. There could be no doubt that some tall young lady had left the flowers; was it really true, then, that Violet had been all this time living in London, thinking about them as they about her, perhaps coming occasionally, in her love of madcap ways, to have a peep at them, herself unseen?

Then her face grew hot, and shame and indignation were at her heart.

If, after all, the girl had run away from the Highlands, why? Was it to please herself with her school-girlish romanticism?—she could not quite believe that of Violet. But she angrily conjectured that, if it really turned out the girl was alive and well, it would be discovered she had run away to rejoin her former sweetheart; and that all this long grief and regret had been

visited upon her friends simply because she had not the courage to declare her intention in the Highlands. And the anger in Mrs. Warrener's gentle bosom was not directed against Violet—whose wayward ways were known—but against George Miller, who had seen their sufferings, and still held his peace; who had come over there and hypocritically talked of the lost Violet; who, having three or four years before pretty nearly compromised the girl's reputation, had now most thoroughly succeeded in doing so, and that for life.

"James," she said, warmly, "if Violet is alive she must have run away to go to Mr. Miller. What else could prompt her to do such a mad thing?"

"That is no matter," the sick man said, gently; "it is enough that she is alive. Go to her, Sarah. Tell her we are glad to know she is alive; and see whether she is well and happy. That is all right. Don't blame her for what has been done."

"But where am I to find her? Oh, James, all this is a sort of wild dream. I don't know what has come over us to-night—on Christmas night—that we are thinking such harsh things about our poor Violet."

Her heart went up in a prayer for forgiveness. The memory of that wayward girl had become a pure and beautiful memory. Surely, if her gentle spirit, on this Christmas evening, were looking down on the household that she used to love, she would regard with a gentle pity and forbearance this black nightmare that had come over them.

"Mamma," said Amy Warrener, with tears running down her face, "if there is any chance at all we must try to find her. Oh, to think of getting our Violet back! Let us go to Mr. Miller if you think he will know—if there is any chance at all, mamma——"

Mrs. Warrener looked at those flowers once more, and she thought of the mysterious visitor.

"Shall we go and ask Mr. Miller?" she said to her brother.

"Yes, yes!" he said, eagerly; "that before everything. You will find him at his father's house to-night, at Sydenham Hill; Amy knows the place. Perhaps—no, he could not have been so cruel—but he is a young man; he has plenty of money and time; he will help you to seek for her. And when you find her, ask no questions of her, Sarah. Let the girl have her own secrets. What she did she was compelled to do, be sure of that. And do not ask her to come here unless she offers to do that. See that she is well, and tell her we are glad to hear news of her—that is all."

"How sure your uncle is that she is alive," said Mrs. Warrener to her daughter, as they hurriedly went away to dress themselves for the plunge into the cold air. "I hope it is not all some strange dream of his, such as he had when he was delirious; you remember the night he fancied Violet was sitting in the easy chair, and that she was his wife, and going over the housekeeping accounts. Anyone would have believed it was true; he was so anxious she should not hurt her eyes with the accounts, and the way he begged her forgiveness for being unable to give her more money——"

"But this is quite different, mamma. There is no delirium in it at all, and oh! I hope it is true!"

When the maid-servant was ordered to put back the dinner—the Christmas dinner—to nine o'clock, she thought her mistress had gone out of her wits. She went down and complained to her colleague in the kitchen that the house had been all at sixes and sevens since the master and missis came back from Scotland; that there never was a laugh in the place now, ever since Miss Violet was drowned; and that altogether she felt so miserable and wretched that she meant to give warning. Meanwhile Mrs. Warrener and her daughter, con-

sidering the scarcity of trains on such a day, had resolved to walk over to Sydenham Hill; and so, with such speed as the slippery roads permitted, they went along to Green Lane, descended into those Dulwich meadows in which Violet had laid the scene of her schoolgirl novel; crossed the meadows by narrow paths, which were dark enough on this dusky night, and at length got into the broad highway that was lit by gas-lamps. The two figures in black, both veiled, were about the only persons visible on this Christmas evening. As Violet had done, but with less oppression of heart, they glanced in at the brilliantly-lit windows they passed from time to time, and heard the merry sounds of music and dancing.

But of all the houses they saw on that dark night none was so brilliant as that at which they finally paused, up here on the brow of the hill. It was a blaze of light in all directions, including a spacious conservatory, the luminous pink and white blinds of which were visible from the gate. The glass-covered portico leading up to the door was lit by many-coloured lamps; it was clear that high festivities were going on within.

Now at the moment when these two visitors presented themselves dinner was over, but the ladies had not left the dining-room, and the butler was still there busy with the wine; while the only person who happened to be in the hall when the bell was rung was the sister of one of the servants, a young girl who had been engaged as an auxiliary for the evening. She opened the door.

"Is Mr. Miller at home—I mean young Mr. Miller?" said Mrs. Warrener.

"Yes, ma'am," said the girl, rather timidly. She thought it was an unusual time for a visit.

"Will you please take my card to him, and say I should like to see him for a moment; I will not detain him."

The girl took the card. But she could not leave one who was so obviously a lady at the door; much less could she ask her to take a seat in the hall. On

her own responsibility, therefore, she asked the two visitors if they would step into the drawing-room, while she took the card to Mr. Miller. Mrs. Warrener and her daughter entered.

Those two black figures looked strange in this great room, which was all a blaze of satin, white, and gold. In anticipation of the ladies coming in from the dining-room the candles had been lit up round the walls, and there was a huge fire throwing pink colours on the gleaming white tiles of the hearth. Then the decorations: the long festoons of ivy leaves, the devices in holly and mistletoe, the beautiful flowers placed around the spacious apartment; all this was a sight to see if the two strangers had been thinking of such things.

Mr. George Miller had earned some little reputation as an orator down Sydenham way, where the people are much given to dinner-parties and other local festivities at which healths are proposed. How this Scotch custom got transferred to Sydenham is at present a mystery. Among certain classes of Scotch people it is almost impossible for half-a-dozen persons to dine together without some one at the end of dinner rising up and making a speech about some one else, who, in his turn, feels bound to propose some other guest's health. Whether any colony of a people, who, however taciturn in general, are prone to gabbling after dinner, ever settled in the neighbourhood of Sydenham, I leave to antiquarians to discuss; but it is the fact that the young men of Sydenham are, above all others, trained from their youth to propose, and respond to, at a moment's notice, such toasts as "The Ladies," "Absent Friends," and the like, and that they acquire this enviable gift by practice in comparatively small social circles.¹ However, on this occasion George Miller had some excuse for being on his feet. He was proposing the health of his

niece, Miss Maud Leicester, who had just been brought in in a high chair with a bar across. Miss Maud paid not the least heed to all the beautiful things that were being said about her, but was making ferocious attacks on an orange which she found much difficulty in holding. She looked up, however, when everybody called out her name and drank a glass of wine to her, and just at the same moment the small maid-servant entered the room, and placed Mrs. Warrener's card before the young master.

Mr. Miller was alarmed, and looked it. He begged to be excused for a moment or two, and left the room. When he found Mrs. Warrener and her daughter awaiting him he hurriedly asked if anything were the matter with Mr. Drummond.

"No," said Mrs. Warrener, making a desperate effort to remain calm, "my brother is getting on very well. It is about another matter. Mr. Miller, do you know whether Violet North is alive?"

The suddenness of the question startled him; he had not been prepared for it. He only stared at her in confusion and bewilderment; he had not an answer ready.

"Oh, Mr. Miller," cried Amy Warrener, with a pathetic entreaty in her voice, "I can see you know where she is. She is alive! You will tell us where Violet is?"

"Really——" said he, and then he stopped in vexatious embarrassment, for, short of a downright lie, there was scarcely a word he could say that would not commit him, while silence would be nearly as fatal to the promise he had given Violet. "Really—this is most extraordinary . . . Violet North alive . . . and you come to me!"

"Yes, we come to you," said Mrs. Warrener, bitterly. "Can you deny that she is alive? Can you deny that you have kept this knowledge to yourself—for what purposes I cannot tell—and have looked on at our misery, and the misery of her relatives, without a touch of pity? Oh, I am ashamed to think of it!"

¹ I am informed that commercial travellers are greatly addicted to the making of speeches after dinner. This may arise from their having so frequently to dine together in country inns with no other form of intellectual exercise to fall back upon.

Well, George Miller began to grow angry. It became clear that, however Violet's friends had come to know of her existence, the whole pack of them would be down upon him—he, poor innocent, having nothing more to do with the matter than the man in the moon. It was too bad. Here he was about to be accused of all sorts of things, with his mouth shut by that promise so that he could not say a word in his defence.

"I don't understand you, Mrs. Warrener," said he; "what makes you think that Violet is alive?"

"Can you deny that you know she is alive?" said Mrs. Warrener, warmly.

"Oh," said he, with an uneasy laugh, "this is madness—pure madness. If I had known she was alive, why should I have concealed it? What could I gain by concealing it? Why, the thing is so absurd. But, tell me, what has suggested all this to you? Why do you think she is alive?"

Mrs. Warrener did not answer his questions; she believed them to be mere empty phrases. It was clear to her, from his refusal to deny his knowledge of Violet's existence, that all this wild story was true; and that her brother's sudden and strange interpretation of the message was something more than the morbid fancy of a sick man.

"And so you will not tell us where Violet is?" she said, firmly.

At this moment the door was opened by a servant, who did not know there was anybody in the drawing-room, and the ladies from the dining-room trooped in. Certainly they looked sufficiently astonished to find Mr. Miller, obviously in great embarrassment, standing in earnest conversation with those two persons dressed in deep mourning; and, indeed, the two black figures formed a singular contrast to the blaze of costume worn by Mrs. Miller and her friends.

"Mother," said the young man, hastily, to a tall and stately woman, fair and good-looking, who wore heavy bracelets, "let me introduce you to Mrs. Warrener and her daughter; you have heard me speak of them."

Mrs. Miller bowed coldly; she thought it was an inopportune moment for a visit.

"And I will tell you why my daughter and myself are here at such an hour," said Mrs. Warrener, with courage, and she spoke rapidly and with great emotion. "Some months ago a young friend of ours—she was our greatest friend—was supposed to be drowned, when she was on a visit with us to the Highlands. She was not drowned. She ran away—why, I do not know; and we have mourned for her as if she were dead, for she was very dear to us. And now your son here, who knows where she is, who has allowed her relatives to grieve for her all this time, he will not say a single word to restore the girl to her friends; are you surprised that—that I should intrude on you when that is what I have come to ask him?"

Her voice trembled with indignation, and she made no effort to conceal her story from these strangers, who looked on in amazement.

"George, what is this?" said the tall, fair woman, remaining quite calm. "Is it about Miss North?"

His face was red with vexation, and there was an angry frown on his brows. He would have liked to have got hold of Violet at that moment to say, "Look here; this is a pretty thing you have let me in for!" But as it was he had to answer something. It was an ugly indictment.

"I suppose it is about Miss North," said he, sulkily; "she caused me enough trouble when she was alive, and it seems I have not done with it yet. Perhaps Mrs. Warrener will tell you what reasons she has for believing all this extraordinary story; I can't make them out."

"If I were a man," said the pale little woman, with increasing indignation, "I should be ashamed to make such pretences. If you have had no pity on the girl's family or on her friends all this time, at least do something to repair the wrong by speaking now. Mr. Miller, where is Violet?"

She suddenly altered her tone to one of piteous entreaty.

"I don't know where she is," he answered, angrily; "I don't care where she is—I don't want to know anything about her—I wish to goodness she was at the bottom of the sea."

"George," his mother said, severely, "this is strange language. Remember you are speaking to a lady. And you certainly seem to suggest that Miss North is *not* at the bottom of the sea, as her friends supposed she was. Do you know where she is?"

"I don't know anything about it."

"Ask him, Mrs. Miller," said Mrs. Warrener, suddenly bursting into tears, "ask him if he can deny that our Violet is alive. Ask him if he has not seen her,—if he does not know that she is alive?"

"George, answer at once!"

"What is the use of answering such questions? Doesn't everybody know the girl is dead?"

His mother regarded him narrowly, and said slowly—

"You must answer *me* then. Do you believe the girl to be dead?"

"It is none of my business," said he, impatiently; "if her friends think she is alive, let them find her. I have nothing to do with her. I tell you I don't know where she is."

"Oh, shame on you!" said Mrs. Warrener; "I did not believe a human being could be so cruel, so indifferent, so heartless. But I will appeal to the girl's father; it is he who must take the matter into his hands. Mrs. Miller, I beg your pardon, and your friends' pardon, for this intrusion. I am sorry to have caused you trouble. Come, Amy."

The little woman was crying. She merely bowed as she turned away, but Mrs. Miller took her hand, and pressed it warmly, and accompanied her into the hall.

"All this is very strange, Mrs. Warrener," said she, in kindly accents, "and the conduct of my son, if he really knows about this girl being alive, is most inexcusable. Believe me, I will see what can be done to get the matter properly explained. Don't think the

worst of him just yet; there may be some reason we don't know."

Many strange and conflicting emotions passed through Mrs. Warrener's heart as she and her daughter went home through the dusky night, and she scarcely knew whether to be glad or sad when she informed her brother of the result of her mission.

"Amy," she said, "you saw his face. Can you doubt that he knows?"

"Not in the least, mamma," was the prompt answer.

"And then, James, his absolute refusal to deny that he had seen her since we were in the Highlands. His mother pressed him to answer; it was no use. It is as clear to me as noonday that he knows where Violet is."

"That is not much matter," said the invalid, absently; "the great fact is that Violet still remains to us—we may see her yet, coming in by the door there, with the bashful, amused look she used to have. We will ask her no questions at all; she has a right to her own secrets."

"That is all very well, James," said his sister with some touch of indignation in her voice, "but I cannot help thinking of all we have suffered, and you especially, all on account of this foolish trick. What was the cause of your illness?—I know very well. And her poor father, too. When I think of that young man, Miller, and of his having known this all along, and his hypocrisy in coming here—oh, I don't know what to think; I don't know which of the two is the worse."

"Sarah, you must say no word against Violet. You know nothing against her; you know nothing of the circumstances. It is enough that she is alive."

The small maid-servant brought in the Christmas-dinner; it was not a gorgeous feast. The invalid had his plate placed on a chair by the side of his couch. When the banquet was over he turned to his niece.

"Amy," said he, "fill up these three glasses. Sarah, we are going to drink health and happiness to our Violet—

long life, and health, and happiness, and many more Christmas evenings pleasanter than I suspect this one has been to her. I never thought we should be able to do that. Wherever she is, whatever may have been her reasons for leaving us, whether we ever see her again or not, no matter. Here is to her long life and happiness, and God bless her!"

Mrs. Warrener looked at the lean and trembling hand that held up the glass, and there was but a doubtful "Amen!" in her heart.

CHAPTER XLI.

A BRINGER OF EVIL.

GEORGE MILLER was to have spent the two days following Christmas with this family party which had been gathered together at Sydenham Hill; but after the visit of Mrs. Warrener and her daughter he saw fit to change his intention. For the rest of that evening even his own mother held aloof from him: again and again he vowed to himself that it was really too bad, but that this was what always came of one's getting oneself mixed up with the romantic sentimentalities of a woman.

Next morning he left the house, and went straight up to the lodgings which he understood that Violet North occupied. The more he thought of his wrongs, the more angry he became, until, when he knocked at the door, he was simply in a towering rage. He would have an end of all this mystery. He would have nothing more to do with this concealment. It was all very well for her to go off scot-free, leaving him under the imputation—against which he could bring no testimony whatever—of having inveigled the girl away from her friends and aided her in a shameful piece of deceit. No; he would have no more of this.

The landlady herself came to the door; as it happened she was in a rage too, for she had just been quarrelling with one of her domestics.

"Does Miss North—I mean Miss

Main—live here?" asked the young man.

"No, she don't."

He was staggered. He looked at the number over the door; he had made no mistake.

"She did live here," continued the landlady, regarding his bewilderment with a morose satisfaction. "She's goin' away o' Monday."

"On Monday!" said he. "And where is she now?"

"I don't know. Gone away for a 'oliday, I believe."

"But surely she will be back here before she goes to—to New York?"

"I suppose she will," said the woman, with a gloomy indifference, "'cause her things are still in her room. She'll be back o' Monday."

"You don't know what hour she will call for her luggage?"

"No."

"Thank you. Good morning."

She shut the door; and he was left standing there, in about as pleasant a predicament, according to his notions, as had ever entrapped a human being. Doubtless she had her passage taken. She would come up at some unexpected hour on Monday, whisk off her luggage in a four-wheeled cab, and be on her way to Liverpool, or Holyhead, or Southampton, before any one was any the wiser. Nay, if he were to stand in Great Titchfield Street from early morning until she appeared, how could he prevent her going? He could not appeal to the police. It is true, he could scold her; and show her the rough usage he was experiencing all through her folly; but he could not compel her to release him from the promise she had exacted; while he looked forward to the pleasing prospect of a somewhat warm interview with Sir Acton North.

He walked away from Great Titchfield Street somewhat gloomily. Besides his sense of personal injury, he had an uncomfortable feeling that a cleverer person than himself—one like Mr. Drummond, for example, who was familiar with hair-splitting—could have hit upon some fair and good reason for

pitching over this promise which would save his conscience. He himself, in his own way, tried to find out some such salve. What was a promise? Not anything in itself; but only of use and value as long as it secured its object. Very well, then. What did Violet want? To get away from England to some place where no one would ever hear of her again, where she should be as one dead. Very well, again. She should have her wish. She should leave on Monday for New York. Her wishes would be respected. But after she was gone, and all she wanted secured, why should he continue to be the victim of a blunder? Why should not he confess the truth to Sir Acton North and Mr. Drummond, and clear himself? That could not affect Violet in any way. He would not tell them whither she had gone—only that she had left England without leaving behind her any information as to her future plans. Moreover, this would not be telling them that she was alive; for they seemed to know that already. And as they knew that, he had not the slightest doubt in the world that some blunder of hers had conveyed the information to them; and was he to bear the brunt of any more of her caprices?

Meanwhile Violet North, with a lighter heart than she had known for many a day, was seated in a railway-carriage and being swiftly carried down to Windsor. The forenoon was singularly bright and clear; the sunshine shone on the meadows that had been washed green by the recent heavy rains, on the brown ploughed fields, where the flocks of rooks and starlings were busy, and on the dark lines of copse that were here and there almost black against the pale blue-and-white sky. It seemed to her that now at last she was escaping from the prison that had hemmed her in since her return from Scotland. All her preparations for her flight into the freedom of the Far West had been made. The bitter agony of parting was over. Soon she would stand on the deck of a noble vessel, and, looking back to the receding land

of her birth, would know that her great sacrifice was now accomplished, and that she was leaving that dearest of all her friends with the prospect daily coming nearer him of a return to his old glad ways, and health, and cheerful spirits.

She already felt herself enfranchised. There was now an end to the weary days over that desk, to the lonely evenings in the small room, to the constant fear of discovery, and to the temptation to wander over to the south side of the river, with all the sore bitterness of heart that these visits occasioned. She had made her last pilgrimage in that direction the night before; and it had been a terrible one. All her life through she would never forget that night—the still, dark Christmas night; her ghost-like stealing up to the cottage in which her friends sate together; her unspoken, unheard, but agonising farewell. No more of that. The brighter days were coming. Had she not said that in the future she would always think of those former companions of hers as cheerful and happy—wandering in the sweet air of the Highlands—gay with the sports of hill-side and loch—enjoying the present and forgetful of all the old bitterness of the past?

So she interested herself in the various out-of-door sights of this bright forenoon—the young wheat, the leafless orchards, the heavy waggons labouring along the muddy roads, and the fields showing here and there patches of water, the result of the recent rains. She began to look out for signs of the great floods of which she had heard; and about Drayton those patches of water in the fields became more marked. Then she caught a glimpse, before getting to Slough, of the great, spectral bulk of Windsor's walls and turrets rising pale and ethereal into the blue-and-white overhead. On again; and now she caught sight of lines of white behind the distant trees; and the hedges seemed to be growing in a lake. But what were these scattered objects to the richly-coloured and brilliant picture that lay before her as the train ran in towards

Windsor? The great castle, with its lofty towers, was a mass of shadow, and so was the picturesque group of houses underneath it by the river; but here, close at hand, the brilliant sun shone on the red houses and the silvery grey turrets of Eton, while all around was a vast sheet of smooth water, reflecting the blues and whites of the sky. This immense lake was broken only by lines of pollard willows, and by some groups of trees in the distance that seemed to have still about them some touch of autumn yellow. Boys were paddling boats up the Eton lanes; still further a-field a great punt was going the round of some workmen's cottages which were completely surrounded by the water.

Both Mr. Dowse and his son were awaiting her at the station; they had driven over in a dog-cart. When Violet got up beside Mr. Dowse, senior, who was driving, he promised her a rare sight; Edward Dowse got up behind; and away they went.

They paused for a moment on Eton bridge to look at the mighty volume of yellow-green water which, coming from the great lake that stretched all across the Brocas meadows, hurled itself against the massive stone piers, and then, rushing through between, spread itself out far and wide again, indicating only here and there, by a summer-house, or some such isolated object, the gardens and orchards it had submerged. They drove along the winding thoroughfare, catching here and there a glimpse of a boat at the end of a street. As they passed out into the country, they found the Playing-fields a sheet of olive-green water, the large elms only being visible. From Fifteen-arch bridge the view was picturesque enough—the isolated lines of trees lit up by the sun; the great plain of water with its dashes of blue; here and there a red brick house surrounded by evergreens; and right in front of them a group of people waiting to be ferried across a part of the road which the floods had submerged.

"How shall we get across?" she asked.

They were standing still on the

middle of the bridge, to have a look at the scene in front of them.

"Oh, all right," said Mr. Dowse, carelessly. "The water is not very deep."

Perhaps he was a little too careless; for on starting to go down the slope to this hollow where the water lay, the horse he was driving stumbled badly, and, on recovering, got an admonishing cut from his master. Whether this trifling accident had fluttered his nerves, or whether some sudden gleam of the water at his feet startled him, can only be guessed; but at all events the animal all at once became unmanageably restive. He reared and plunged—splashing the water about him, and causing the women who were standing by—waiting for the punt—to scream with alarm.

"Hold tight!" Mr. Dowse called out to Violet.

The warning was just given in time; for the next instant the horse made a sudden plunge to one side of the road, which nearly threw the dog-cart bodily into the deeper water by the side of the highway; and then it dashed madly forward. The driver had no sort of control over it; but fortunately the road in front was pretty straight. And so away they went at a furious pace, to the no small consternation of one or two people who were coming along the road; and so intent were Mr. Dowse and Violet in watching the excited animal that was now placing their lives in jeopardy, that they had not the slightest notion that they alone were the occupants of the vehicle. When the horse swerved in the hollow, young Dowse had been pitched clean off the back seat of the dog-cart, falling heavily on the wooden palings by the side of the road.

The way was clear before them; and in time the runaway horse showed symptoms of moderating his speed. He was finally stopped by a waggoner, who, happening to look back, and seeing what had occurred, had the presence of mind to draw his huge waggon right across the road, completely blocking all passage. There

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was no collision. The man got hold of the head of the animal, which now stood trembling and excited; and then it was that Mr. Dowse discovered that his son was missing.

"Good heavens," he said, "where is he?"

They looked back; there were one or two people running towards them. When these came up, the news was brief, but terrible enough. The young gentleman had been pitched right on his head. He was lying insensible. They had sent into Eton for a surgeon.

"Go back to him," said Violet, instantly, to her companion; "I will wait here with the dog-cart."

Mr. Dowse seemed stupefied. He did not think what he was doing in leaving his girl in charge of a frightened horse, even although the great waggon still blocked the way.

"Yes, yes," he said, "stay here for a minute—I must see—what has happened——"

He set out to run. He met one or two country people; he asked them no questions. Then he came in sight of a group of persons standing by the roadside, not far from the spot where the horse had bolted.

The young man was in the middle of that group, his head supported on a friendly knee. He was apparently lifeless; not even a groan escaped him. There was no outward sign of injury, except a slight trace of blood about the lips.

"Stand back!" the father said, sternly, to the small and eager crowd. "Stand back, and give him air! You have sent for a surgeon?"

"Yes, sir."

"Ted! Teddy!" the elder man cried with some vague hope of arousing him to consciousness. "Are you badly hurt, lad?"

There was no answer. He looked despairingly around.

"Is there a drop of brandy to be had—or whisky——?"

There was no answer to that, either. Fortunately, at this moment, a brougham

came along the road, the only occupant of which was an old lady, who, although unknown personally to the Dowses, was a neighbour of theirs and knew them by sight. When she discovered what had occurred, she instantly placed her carriage at Mr. Dowse's disposal. The apparently lifeless body was lifted in; the father followed; and the coachman was bidden to drive gently on to The Laurels.

They came up to the point at which Violet had been left. She was now down in the road.

"What has happened?" she said, with a pale face, to Mr. Dowse; but the sight she saw inside the carriage was enough.

"Will you get some of the people to bring the dog-cart along?" said Mr. Dowse: it was not an occasion for ceremony.

They drove on again with that mournful burden; and she, having given the waggoner half-a-crown to leave his waggon for a few minutes and take the horse and dog-cart on to Mr. Dowse's house, walked slowly after. There were gloomy forebodings in her mind. That slowly-driven carriage away along there seemed to be like a hearse. Why was it that, wherever she went, death, or the semblance of death, dogged her footsteps, and was for ever plucking the sunshine out of the sky? Her coming seemed to be the signal for the coming of all misfortunes; birds of evil omen followed after her; she was as one doomed, association with whom was fatal.

Trembling and full of fear, she walked up to the house. She dreaded to hear the wail of a mother over her only son; she imagined the reproach with which that mother would raise her eyes from her son's pallid face and fix them on the stranger who seemed the herald and the occasion of all evil things.

The poor mother had no such thoughts in her head; even if this were a time for affixing responsibility, she certainly would not have considered Violet to be the cause of this lamentable accident. But all the same the girl was oppressed

by some strange feeling that it was dangerous for any one to be linked, in however slight a degree, with one whom evil fortune had marked out for its own; and so it was that she did not dare to go into that room where, as she knew, the young man lay, watched by his agonised parents. All the doors were open. She walked into the drawing-room, and sat down, alone. Then she heard the doctor's carriage drive up to the front of the house.

CHAPTER XLII.

REPENTANCE.

On the morning after Christmas, Mrs. Warrener carried her great news up to Lady North; and that circumspect prim little woman was a good deal more agitated than usual, and her cold, observant grey eyes were full of wonder.

"It is a strange story, Mrs. Warrener," she said, quickly. "Do you believe it yourself? Can you believe it? You know the fancies that get into the heads of persons who are ill; and you know your brother has been delirious."

"Yes, I know that," said Mrs. Warrener, "and my first impression last night was that he was wandering again; but no—not at all—and then, as I have told you, Mr. Miller confirms my belief. I am sure he knows all about her. I want Sir Acton to go to him—his authority will get at the truth——"

"My husband is in Belgium, Mrs. Warrener; do you think, do you really think, I should be justified in telegraphing to him to come home?"

"Most decidedly," said Violet's friend, without a moment's hesitation.

"You are so sure all this is true?"

"I am."

"He will think I have gone mad if I tell him why he is to come home."

"Then don't tell him. Merely say that he is urgently wanted."

"And in the meanwhile——"

"In the meanwhile, we ought to put an advertisement in the papers which may catch Violet's eye. And perhaps you might go to Mr. Miller and beg him

to tell you where Violet is. He may be kinder to you than he was to me."

"But—but—," said Lady North, still a little bewildered. "What could be his object in concealing the fact? Is it possible he has been looking at us all this time wearing mourning for a girl whom he knew to be alive?"

"That part of it I can't make out at all," said Mrs. Warrener, rather wistfully. "But I am sure that Violet is in London."

The advertisement appeared in several of the newspapers on the Monday morning; probably few cared to pause and speculate over the story that lay behind such an ordinary notice as this:—*Violet N——. We all know that you are alive and in London. Pray return. We will do everything you can desire to secure your happiness.* But George Miller knew the story; and as soon as he saw this advertisement, he promptly said to himself—

"Very well. They all know without my telling them. I have not broken any promise; it is no fault of mine that they know. But, now they do know, am I to be made the victim of a pretence of concealment which is no concealment at all?"

That reasoning entirely satisfied him. Violet had had her wish, in so far as she was leaving the country without his having spoken a single word about her being alive to any person; and, so soon as she had really left, and disappeared without leaving any trace behind her, he considered he would be justified in clearing away the suspicions under which he had been most unjustly placed. By which route would she leave England? In any case she would be clear off on Wednesday night. On Wednesday therefore, he would show to his friends how harshly they had dealt with him, and by that time Violet would be safe from pursuit, for neither he nor they would know when, or by which line, she had gone to America.

The cup of his troubles and mortification, however, was not yet full. On the Monday evening, just as he was going along to his club, Lady North and

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Anatolia drove up to his rooms in Half-Moon Street and stopped him on the pavement.

"You will excuse our calling on you at such a time, Mr. Miller; but we thought we should most likely catch you now," said Lady North.

He inwardly made use of language which, had they heard it, would have frightened his two visitors out of their wits. It was too bad, he thought. Here he was to undergo a repetition of the scene already enacted at Sydenham Hill; and as it was women, and always women, who came to put him under a raking fire of indignant reproaches, what answer could he make? He was not much of a heroic person; but he would twenty times rather have encountered the menaces of Violet's father.

"Will you walk up stairs?" said he, with great courtesy, as he opened the door with his latch-key.

He lit the candles on the table.

"Can I offer you some tea, Lady North? A couple of minutes——"

"No, thank you," said Lady North. She was a little frightened; and she concealed her fright under a demeanour of cold and proud reserve. She also seemed to add some inches to her stature as she continued—"Of course you know why we have come?"

"Well, yes, I suppose so," said he, sulkily. "Mrs. Warrener has been to you with that absurd story?"

"Is it absurd?" Lady North said. "Mr. Miller, you surely cannot mean to trifle with us in such a matter. Is it true?"

"I don't see why you should come to me at all," said he, becoming a little more vehement. "I have had enough of it. Mrs. Warrener comes over to our house on a Christmas evening, when we have a family-party gathered together; and straightway begins to accuse me, before all these people, of all manner of things; and of course, as she is a woman, I can't give her the answer I would give to a man. I think it is rather hard. And now, I suppose you too, Lady North, mean to do the same thing. Well, I can't help it."

He affected an air of resignation. But Lady North was much cooler than Mrs. Warrener had been; and she was not to be put off by this specious show of injury.

"You know very well, Mr. Miller," said she calmly, "that a single word of yours would relieve you at once from those very serious charges. I cannot blame Mrs. Warrener. I must say I consider your conduct as very strange. It appears you cannot deny your being aware that Violet is alive——"

"One minute, Lady North," said he, interrupting her, and speaking with some decision. "There is no use in our quarrelling; and I can see you are going to say the same things that Mrs. Warrener said. That won't do any good. But I will tell you what I will do: if you like to wait till Wednesday evening—the day after to-morrow—I will tell you all I know about this affair. And I won't tell you before then."

"Really, Mr. Miller," said his visitor, "this is most extraordinary conduct on your part——"

"Yes, I dare say it is," said he, his temper rising again. "But don't you think that before you find me guilty of cruelty, and caprice, and all the rest of it, you might wait to hear what I have to say? And if you would ask Mrs. Warrener to be present on Wednesday evening, I should be obliged to you. I wish to say a word or two to her——"

"You will allow me to say that I think Mrs. Warrener has acted most properly," observed Lady North, coldly.

"Yes, precisely," said he, with some bitterness. "That is because you are as ignorant of all the circumstances of the case as she is."

"I hope Sir Acton will be home by Wednesday evening," said Lady North, not a little anxious to turn the whole of this serious matter over to her husband.

"I hope so too," said Mr. Miller, promptly. "If I am to appear before a family gathering, and be impeached, and be put on my defence, I prefer that a man should be my judge."

"I am sure no one wishes to impeach

you," said Lady North, rather regretfully, "if you would only tell us where Violet is."

He remained silent. He was not to be caught by this innocent invitation.

"Then we shall see you on Wednesday evening," she said, rising to go. "Will you come to dinner?"

"No, thank you," said he, for he still had the feeling that he had been badly treated. "A man going to be hanged does not have breakfast with the hangman. I am to be tried and convicted, you know."

"I am sorry if we have judged your conduct harshly," said Lady North gently. "But you must admit that we had some cause."

He would admit nothing of the kind. After his two visitors had left, he walked along to his club, and as he walked his mind was full of thoughts of vengeance, directed more particularly against Mrs. Warren, whom he regarded as in most part responsible for all this trouble. Violet, of course, was the first cause. What business had she to thrust these conditions upon him; and then to go by some act of folly or other, and let them know she was alone and in London? Then those other women, complaining, accusing, worrying him as if he were a thief who had some silver spoons secreted about his person! He would have it out with them on the Wednesday evening. He would not suffer all this annoyance for nothing. And especially would he have a retort ready for Mrs. Warren.

He had dinner by himself; and as he brooded over all the circumstances of this strange business, his mind, by some curious process, began to construct the form of that retort. He was innocent: what if he threw back on his chief accuser the charge of being the origin of all this mischief? Mrs. Warren had plainly intimated that he was the cause of Violet's having suddenly left the Highlands, and, in consequence, of her having inflicted so great an amount of pain upon her friends: what if he boldly retorted, at haphazard, that she herself, Mrs. Warren, was the cause?

Violet would not be there to contradict him, even if it chanced that what he said was inaccurate. But the more he thought of it the more he considered it probable that Mrs. Warren was the cause. He had seen in these later interviews with Violet every symptom of the girl's being devoted heart and soul to this man who had unwittingly become his rival. Of Mr. Drummond's great love and affection for Violet, the constant harping on the memory of her that ran through his delirious imaginings could leave no manner of doubt, it doubt had at any time been possible. What, then, could have caused the girl to take so desperate a step as that of pretending she had been drowned, in order to escape for ever from her friends? Mr. Miller was, in his own estimation, not by any means a fool. He knew what mothers and sisters could become, when their son or their brother proposed to introduce a new member into the family. He knew the jealousy of women; he could imagine something of their malign ingenuity. And what could possibly be against this marriage between Mr. Drummond and Violet unless it was Mrs. Warren herself? and whose interests but hers could suffer?

"And so," argued this young man with himself, in great bitterness of heart, "having, by some means or other, made the girl miserable, having driven her from all her friends and made an outcast and a wanderer of her, and having securely locked up the door so that no one should come in to share with her Drummond's small income, she turns round on me and makes me out to be the cause of all this mischief and misery, and brings accusations against me before my whole family, so that my own mother won't speak to me! Jove, this must be set straight!"

When he went up to Euston Square on that Wednesday evening, he had the air of a man who was not to be trifled with. Moreover, he had conned over a few little bits of rhetoric with which to rebut the astounding charges that had been brought against him. The trial of Warren Hastings was nothing to this.

Sir Acton North was there, grave and silent: he would say nothing against the young man until he had been heard. Mrs. Warrener was there too, with a great anxiety in her pale and gentle face. Lady North was the third figure in the assembled court; none of her daughters being present.

"Although I am not represented by counsel," the young man was beginning to say with bitter sarcasm, when he was sternly interrupted by Sir Acton North.

"This is not a subject for joking, Mr. Miller," said he. "Tell me at once—is my daughter alive?"

"Yes," was the simple answer. Mrs. Warrener clasped her hands—there was not one there who loved Violet better than she did.

"Where is she?"

"I don't know."

An ominous frown came over Sir Acton North's forehead.

"Come, sir. You may have trifled with those ladies; you shall not trifle with me!"

"I do not know where she is," George Miller continued, with a grand air of indifference; "but I will tell you where I believe her to be—I believe she is now on her way to America. And if you will listen, I will tell you all I know about her. You may believe the story or not; I cannot help it if you don't. But at least I shall try to show to these ladies that their imagination got the better of them when they accused me of being a monster of deceit and cruelty, and perhaps they will acknowledge that they were a trifle precipitate. I knew nothing at all about—about Miss North—being alive, till a little over a month ago. There's a decorator-fellow in Regent Street, who got into my Club on the strength of his being an artist—I believe he was an artist at the time—and he began talking to me one night about a mysterious sort of girl who was in his father's place. He believed she knew some one in the *Judæum*. I asked her name—he said it was Miss Main; and the coincidence struck me, for I remembered that schoolmistress. I asked more about her; some things

seemed very odd; I thought I would go and see her. Well, I watched her coming out of the shop one evening; and I made sure it was Violet, though she was closely veiled. I watched her once or twice; then I spoke to her. It was Violet—I mean, Miss North. Very well. I was a little taken aback, of course; for I could not understand it; but she said she wanted everybody to believe she was dead—she was going away from England, she said; and she insisted on my promising not to tell a human being that I had seen her—"

Here the young man coloured somewhat.

"You may think I am breaking that promise; but, you see, I made it in the expectation that I could reason her out of all this; and then, in any case, what she wanted was to get safely away; and then, when you all seemed to know quite well, what was the use of my refusing to speak any longer—"

These somewhat incoherent reasons had not been prepared beforehand; there was no precision of language about them. Moreover, the young man said nothing of the further reason that he was determined to have no more personal annoyance over a matter which did not concern him.

"Well, I gave her my word of honour not to tell you. Perhaps that was wrong; but I was a little bit flustered; and I wanted to gain time. Then she said she had pretended to be drowned because she thought she was making her friends miserable; and after a time they would forget her. She was very anxious to leave England I could see; but when she asked for news of all of you, and when I told her that Mr. Drummond was ill, then she would not go until she had news of his getting better. I had to go to her every few days with my report; she was very anxious. I don't know whether you believe all that I am telling you; I cannot help it if you don't; but I am telling you all I know; and I think it is very hard that I should have been dragged into the matter at

all; and then get nothing but angry suspicions for my pains."

"Well?" said Sir Acton. He was pacing up and down one end of the room, his hands behind his back. There was scarcely any trace of agitation on the deeply-lined face.

"Well, that is all."

"But what made her leave the Highlands in such a way?" cried Lady North. "Why did she go and do such a thing?"

"You may well ask why!" said Mr. Miller, with some warmth. "You, I suppose, were quick to follow Mrs. Warrener in charging the whole thing upon me. I was the cause of it. I had induced the girl to come to London; I had concealed the fact of her being here; I had inflicted all this misery on her friends. Perhaps I might suggest another version. I have heard how even very amiable women can treat a girl who thinks of marrying their brother or their son. I knew that Violet was too proud to bring dissension into any family—to go anywhere as an intruder. Yes, I will tell you my version of it. I will confess I wanted to marry Violet too. I found I had no chance whatever; she cared more for Mr. Drummond than for everybody else in the world; what *he* thought of her perhaps Mrs. Warrener can tell you. I believe they might have been married now, but for interference. When I first saw her, about a month ago, and when she talked of the misery she had been causing her friends, I fancied she had dreaded entering into this marriage, and had run away from it at all costs; but I discovered afterwards that she thought of nothing else in the world but Mr. Drummond. Very well, then, what was the cause of her misery? *Who* was the cause of it? And who was the cause of all this suffering?"

Lady North seized the young man by the arm.

"For pity's sake!" she said.

He turned from Sir Acton, to whom he had been appealing; and there he saw Mrs. Warrener, her head buried in her hands, crying most bitterly. It was a cruel revenge to take for a few indig-

nant words. But the pale little woman pulled herself together; and she spoke through her sobs.

"God forgive me if I have done wrong," she said, "through any mistake. But you do not know me if you think my home was not as open to Violet as—as my heart was. I loved her always. I should have loved her ten times more if she had married my brother. Mr. Miller, if I have suspected you wrongly, I beg your pardon."

"Well," said he, with some compunction, "you *did* suspect me wrongly; for you see how I was dragged into this affair through no wish of my own. And I am sorry if I have hurt your feelings, Mrs. Warrener. You know better than anyone else what the relations between you and Violet were. That is no business of mine."

This interruption had but little interest for Sir Acton North; he impatiently waited until these explanations had been made; and then he urged the young man to continue, and tell them what further steps Violet had taken.

"She sailed for America on Monday last," he said, simply.

"But for what part?"

"I don't know."

"You don't mean to say," said Sir Acton, stopping in that hurried pacing to and fro—"you don't mean to say that she has left this country altogether, without leaving the least trace behind her?"

"That was her intention."

"Oh, it is monstrous; it is inconceivable! What madness has possessed the girl? And you—you might have told us a week ago——"

"You forget," said the younger man, "that I had given her my word of honour not to tell you. It was not for me to interfere. I did my best to stop her; but when I saw she was determined to go to America—well, a girl knows her own business best."

"What is the name of those people in Regent Street?" demanded Sir Acton, abruptly.

"Dowse and Son."

"Do you know where they live?"

"In the country somewhere. They don't live in London, though young Dowse gives himself a holiday up here occasionally. If you want to make inquiries of them, you must wait till to-morrow."

All this time Mrs. Warrener had been sitting silent, her head bent down, the expression of her face betraying no consciousness of what was going on around her. Indeed, her thoughts were elsewhere—away back in the past, which she was now trying to read by a new and terrible light. If George Miller had resolved to have his revenge, he had now succeeded; a horrible fear darkened this poor woman's heart, and she scarcely dared to confess to herself all the possibilities to which his random accusation pointed. That accusation, it is true, was in one sense wrong—even preposterous. That she should have interfered between Violet and her brother through jealousy, or from a wish to protect his small income, was a notion that might occur to a business-like young man like Mr. Miller; not to her. But if the rest of it were true? If she had in reality poisoned these two minds by her innocent misrepresentations—what then? Had she ruined the lives of the two people whom she held, next to her own daughter, most dear in the world?

She rose, pale and *distracted*, to bid them good-bye. She was sure Sir Acton would find Violet. He would let her know as his inquiries proceeded. Mr. Miller would forgive her if she had unintentionally wronged her.

When she reached home, she did not stay to take off her bonnet and things; she went straight to her brother's room. But she paused at the door, physically unable to go further. Strange tremblings passed through her frame; she caught at the handle of the door to steady herself; a giddiness came over her eyes. She tried to form some notion of what she would say to him; and she could not. The one great yearning of her soul was to crave his forgiveness for the irreparable wrong she had done.

She managed to open the door; he was lying on the couch apparently

asleep. She gently shut the door behind her; and stole over to the couch, and knelt down. She looked at the pale, emaciated hand that lay helpless there; that was her doing.

He had been half-awake. He turned round and regarded her with some surprise. She could not speak.

"What is the matter, Sarah?" said he.

She only took the thin, white hand, and kissed it passionately, and burst into tears. Then he tried to raise himself a bit, and a strange, solemn look came into the wasted face.

"It was all a dream, then," he said, with resignation. "We shall never see her again."

"Oh, James, James!" his sister cried, with passionate grief; "it will break my heart to tell you! Violet is alive—it was indeed she who brought you the flowers—she has never ceased to love you—and—perhaps you will see her again—but—how can I look on her face! And you—how can you ever forgive me—if—if all this is true—and it looks so terribly true!"

His eyes were troubled and bewildered by her wild speech; but he sank back on the couch with a sigh of relief.

"Violet is alive, then," he said: that was enough.

"But listen, James," she continued in a quick, eager way, sometimes interrupted by a sob; "and then you will forgive me if you can. I made a terrible mistake; I must have misled you both; I thought she cared all along for Mr. Miller, and that they had only a lover's quarrel; and now I am sure I was altogether and terribly wrong, for here she has been in London all this time, and Mr. Miller himself confesses that she has loved you all through with her whole heart, and has never cared for him at all. And now I see it so clearly—I begged you not to speak to her, to give her a chance, for I knew she was proud and would keep to her word at all hazards; and she would so readily misconstrue your silence, and your looking pained and anxious——"

"Sarah," said her brother, raising himself on the couch, and regarding her, "all this is very wild talking. You accuse yourself needlessly. You appear to think that all the relations between Violet and me were managed by you; and that through some mistake you managed wrongly. It was not so. In such a matter I could not have trusted the opinion or report of anyone, although, of course, you were Violet's intimate friend, and you knew more about the ways and natural wishes of a girl than I did. Don't blame yourself needlessly. When that compact between her and me was broken—it was only the awakening from a dream, the vanishing of a rainbow—we did it of our own free will, and after all the explanation that was necessary. I saw her looking miserable, and I could not bear that. You spoke of a lovers' quarrel; of her agitation over that letter from young Miller—well, what could be more likely?"

"But I was wrong—I am sure I was terribly wrong," his sister cried.

"What matter?" he continued, calmly. "I did not go by your judgment only; I went to herself. I asked her if she was harassed or troubled by our engagement, and that she should be free if she wished. And then I remember the bright and grateful look with which she confessed it was all a mistake—she held out her hand to me—it was the first time for days I had seen her look happy. That was enough."

"And yet," said Mrs. Warrener, sadly and thoughtfully, and almost as if she were speaking to herself—"and yet if that gladness were caused by something else?—if she believed, or had been taught to believe, that you had only a friendly affection for her?—if she thought she was relieving you from an obligation that was becoming daily more painful—" She rose, as if she would throw off the burden of this thinking; her face looked haggard and tired. "Oh, Violet," she said, "why did you go away—without a word!"

"Where has she gone?" Mr. Drummond asked; you would have thought he was speaking of Amy, who had gone

to spend the evening with a neighbour of theirs.

"To America. She fancies no one knows she is alive—no one but Mr. Miller, who discovered her accidentally about a month ago—and she made him promise to keep her secret. Imagine the poor girl going away, out to that strange country all by herself, without a friend in the world, and all because she fancied she was somehow making you miserable, and that nothing would cure that but your believing she was dead. There is a great deal that is strange and unintelligible in all this; but to my dying day I will believe that I have had more to do with it than I can dare to think of. If only I could see Violet—for five minutes—if I could ask her one simple question—but I know the answer already. That girl has loved you as few girls have ever loved a man; that I am sure of now, when it is too late. And if I were to see her, what could I do now but go down on my knees before her and beg for her forgiveness? She would give it to me, I know. There never was anything she could deny her friends. But now if she is lost to us for ever—if we are to go on from year to year thinking of her as a stranger and a wanderer in some distant part of the world—I think that will be worse even than when we thought she was dead."

"I will find her," said Mr. Drummond, absently.

She looked at the wasted frame, and the helpless arms: and her eyes grew moist again.

"I will find her when I get well," he continued, speaking slowly and at intervals, "I have never had anything to do in my life; this will be something. I shall have done a good work when I recover Violet, and take her back to her friends and her home. It is a strange thing to think that I shall see her again. Many a time, in walking in the streets, or along a road, I have seen in the distance the figure of a tall girl; and I have wondered what I should say and do if this were really Violet coming along, brought back to us out of the

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grave. I thought of that many a time. And now I shall go on my pilgrimage with the certainty of really seeing her some day—of taking her hand and hearing her speak—not as a mere ghostly picture in a dream, but the real, bright madcap Violet of old, who troubled us sorely, and whom we loved. . . . And we shall scold her, too, for these wild pranks; and shall we not be proud of her when we bring her back—like a king's daughter—in clothing of wrought gold—with gladness and rejoicing? But there will be no wedding in any king's palace or elsewhere for her—enough of mischief came out of thinking of that in the old time. We shall bring her back only to the fireside, and to the old, quiet ways, and to our hearts. It is nothing to cry about, Sarah; it is a thing to get well and strong for. We want courage, hope, and strength. But my hands don't look very strong, do they?"

He held them out and smiled. She could not see them for her tears.

CHAPTER XLIII.

AT LAST!

It is a pale, clear morning down here in Berkshire. A faint blue mist hangs about the black and distant woods; but closer at hand, in the garden of The Laurels, the sunshine is bright enough on the wintry-looking evergreens, on the ruddy berries left on the hawthorn-trees, and on the gleaming scarlet bunches on the hollies. There is something odd about the appearance of the front of the house: is it that the blinds of all the windows are drawn down? There is no sign of life about the place; and an intense stillness broods over both house and garden.

But by and by the figure is seen of a young girl who comes slowly along one of the paths. She is wandering idly about these empty grounds, by herself. And apparently her thoughts are none of the brightest, for there is a sad look in her eyes, and her cheeks have not the healthful brilliancy of a young

girl's complexion. And what is she saying to herself?—

"They ought not to ask me to stay; I shall become a curse to them, as to everyone with whom I have been associated. I have never meant any harm to any one all my life; but misfortune goes hand-in-hand with me, and misery is the only gift I have to offer to my friends. It is better I should be away among strangers. That poor young man—the few seconds in which he was sensible—why did he beg me to stay with his mother? I cannot comfort her: I shall only bring further ill to her and to her house."

A servant comes out, and says a word to her; she turns and goes in-doors. She ascends the stairs noiselessly; and as she goes by one room in the corridor she seems to listen—but what is the use of listening when only the awful silence of death is within? She passes onward to a further room, and here she finds a middle-aged woman, with silvery white hair, sitting mournfully and helplessly before the fire.

"My child, have you considered? come here," the woman says in a trembling voice.

The girl goes over to her, and puts her hand in the outstretched hand.

"Yes, I have thought about it," is the reply uttered in a low voice. "You have been very kind to me—I would do anything for you—but I cannot stay in England."

"You will not take pity on the empty house," says the mother, beginning to cry gently. "It was his last wish. You would be a daughter to us."

"I cannot—I cannot," says the girl, almost wildly. "You don't know how—how I bring misfortune to my friends. I want to be away—away from England—among strangers. I shall do no more mischief then to those I love. And as for you, Mrs. Dowse, you know I cannot ever be to you what you have lost; and I should only remind you constantly of your great trouble—"

"Am I likely to forget that, ever?" she says.

"But in the meantime I will stay with you for a week or two. Then you must leave this house, and go away for a time: Mr. Dowse has already spoken to me about that. Will you come out into the garden now? the fresh air will do you good."

She only shakes her head. She has some writings in her lap, over which she has been poring and crying. These are some of poor Teddie's poetical flights; and his mother finds in them the expression of the most tender and beautiful spirit that ever breathed upon the earth.

She went noiselessly down the stair again, intending to go out into the garden; but as she passed along the hall, she found the open doorway suddenly darkened by the tall figure of a man. She looked up with a vague alarm; then she uttered a slight cry, and would have retreated. But the next moment the old instinct prevailed; she went quickly forward, her face upturned; and she found his arms close round her.

"Violet, my girl!" said this tall man, struggling to retain his composure, though his voice was shaken. "You have come back to us, after all! What has been the meaning of all this——"

Her heart was beating so wildly that she could not answer. There was a strange joy overflowing her soul. All the gloomy fancies—the desperate desire to forsake her friends and become a wanderer—seemed to have disappeared the moment she met her father's eyes and found his arms inclosing her. The world had come back to her, when she had been persuading herself she was scarcely of it. There was not a thought now of her being a misery-bringer.

"Come," said he, "let me see you. Let me see what you are like after all this terrible business."

He disengaged her from him, and held her at a short distance; the light entering under the narrow veranda fell full upon her face, and showed how sadly worn and pale it was.

"You have not been happy, Violet. Why did you go away? Why did you want to leave us?"

Then he suddenly recollected himself. He had independently arrived at the same decision as Mr. Drummond. If this wayward girl were ever to be brought back to them, they should ask her no questions. She should return on her own terms; it was enough that they were to get her back at all.

"No, Violet," said he, "I won't ask you any questions."

"Let us go outside," she said, in a low voice. "Do you know he is dead?"

"Yes. The foreman at the works told me this morning."

They passed out into the garden; she had, as of old, taken his arm, but her hand trembled much, and she was not so firm and upright in her walk as usual.

"Papa, do they all know?" she asked, her face bent on the ground.

"Yes, certainly, Violet; how could you—but no, no! What you did was doubtless quite right. You had your reasons. You were quite right."

He stammered, and looked embarrassed. He was so glad to see his daughter again that he would forgive everything, and ask no questions, as he had promised. Nevertheless, the inexplicable character of her conduct haunted him, and continually provoked him into "whys" and "hows."

"They all know? Mrs. Warren, too?" she said.

"Yes, certainly."

"And I have made them suffer, and you a great deal; and now it has all come to nothing," she said, sadly. "There is no use in my going away now."

"In your going away!" he cried, in dismay. "Of course you are not going away, Violet. Now we have caught you, we sha'n't let you slip from us again. You are going back with us, Violet. And what a chance it was!—we were told you had left on Monday."

"I was to have done so," she answered, simply, "but Mr. Dowse persuaded me to stay. His wife was in such a terrible way when Mr. Edward died; we thought she wouldn't get over it."

Sir Acton began to feel a great pity for these people, whom he had never seen. He was not a very sympathetic man, and, in any case, he would have had little in common with Mr. Edward Dowse; but he could see very plainly that but for the death of that young man, he, Sir Acton, would almost certainly have never seen his daughter again in this world; and now his gratitude took the form of compassion for the survivors.

"Yes, I am very sorry for these poor people," said he, "very sorry. You must do what you can for them, Violet. But, in the first place, you know you must come at once and pay us a short visit—even if you run back here afterwards—just to show the girls you are alive, and then they will feel safe in putting off their mourning."

"Oh, no, no, papa!" she cried, shrinking back so that she even withdrew her hand from his arm; "I can never go back like that. I have done too much harm. I should be ashamed to meet anyone I used to know!"

"They will forget all that!" said he, vehemently; "they will be delighted to see you, Violet. But what *did* you mean by running away in that fashion without telling us first what was the matter?—eh? Why didn't you come to me? Well, never mind that; I shan't ask any questions. But—but if you have any explanations or questions——"

He had never departed from this old conviction that women had a secret code of feelings, and sentiments, and opinions amongst themselves, which no man could hope to understand. He knew there was a mystery about this affair which it was no use his trying to solve.

"Violet," said he, with some embarrassment, "when the foreman told me this morning you were still down here, I—I thought you might perhaps like to see one of your old friends. I telegraphed to Mrs. Warrener——"

The girl began to look alarmed.

"—In fact, she came down with me. Would you like to see her?"

"No," the girl was beginning to say, when he interrupted her.

"In fact, Violet, she is here. She is

down in the road. She is most anxious to see you; for it appears she had something to do with your going away, and she wishes to make explanations to you; she seems very sorry."

"Very well," said the girl, nerving herself, "I will see her. Shall we walk down to the gate, papa?"

But this did not suit his purpose at all. He wanted to leave the two women together. Of course they had their secrets, their sentiments, their occult reasons; how could he aid in this esoteric interview? So he bade Violet wait in the garden, where there were paths among the laurels and other evergreens fitted for quiet talking, while he went down to the road to fetch the anxious and trembling-hearted little woman, who was walking to and fro there.

When Mrs. Warrener came up into this garden, she came alone; and for a time she did not see Violet. But suddenly the girl appeared, and went forward to her, calmly and sadly, with her eyes cast down. Was this the bright and daring Violet of old? A throb of pain went through the heart of her visitor.

"Violet," said Mrs. Warrener, timidly, and she was trembling not a little, "I am not surprised that you did not wish to see me. I have done you a great injury."

But this strange reserve between these two could not continue. Were they both eager for forgiveness that they stood apart, each waiting for the other's approach to the old kindness? The next minute Mrs. Warrener had caught the girl in her arms, and had hidden her face in her bosom, whilst she was sobbing out there, in passionate accents, the long story of her terrible mistake and all its consequences, with her present professions of penitence, and prayers for forgiveness. Much of all this startled Violet, and even frightened her. Was it true, then, that when they first heard of her being in London they imagined she had run away to rejoin George Miller? No, she knew one at least who had not believed that of her.

"And when you see him, Violet," her friend was saying in rather a wild way, "when you come to see him, and

see what a wreck has been made, will you be able to forgive me then? That is all my doing too. He was a changed man from the moment we believed you were drowned; he thought of nothing else but that; it was those long midnight walks in the rain and cold that brought on the fever."

"He has suffered all that for me," the girl murmured, almost to herself. She had no thought of what she also had borne.

"But now—but now, Violet," said her friend, looking up to her face, with tender and beseeching eyes, "it will be all different now, and there will be no more danger of these terrible misunderstandings. I will tell him why you looked glad when you broke off the engagement; I will tell him why you went away from us; he will understand how well one woman has loved him, if another has nearly wrecked his life. Oh, Violet, I could have believed anything of your unselfishness, but this—well, a man ought to be content with life who has been shown such devotion."

"If you don't mind, Mrs. Warrener," said the girl, calmly, "I think perhaps I had better make these explanations myself. I will write to him."

The other remained silent, the tears running down her face. She felt the rebuke, although Violet had meant no rebuke. All that the girl had intended to convey was that henceforth it might be better if she spoke direct to this man, and alone, about such matters as concerned their two selves.

"Then you will write to him soon?" said Mrs. Warrener, piteously; "and you will come and see us soon, Violet? I am so anxious to have all this misery undone and atoned for, as far as that is possible now: you will come and help us to make it up to him? As for yourself, I can only hope you will forgive me in time. And, if it is not too late, Violet, I shall see you both get back to your old selves, and we may go to the Highlands again this year."

The girl shuddered.

"No—no," she said, "that would be too terrible."

"Then to the south?" said her friend,

with some desperate effort at cheerfulness. "Perhaps the south would be better for him?—and then, as soon as he is quite well, you shall have no more of my intrusion. Mr. Miller said something the other day about sisters and mothers—and their jealousy; you shall not have to fear my jealousy. I have enjoyed my brother's society for a great many years; it is time I gave up my place to another——"

"But not to me, then," said the girl quickly, and yet with something of sadness in her tone. "It is no use our talking of anything like that. When your brother gets well, and goes away, it is you who must go with him."

"But you are coming to see him, Violet?" the pale little woman cried in dismay; "you are coming to live with us again? You will give us the chance of trying to atone for what is past?"

"Yes, I will come and see him," said Violet, calmly, "in a day or two. Then I must return here. Afterwards—well, that has to be settled yet."

Mrs. Warrener could not understand why Violet spoke thus. Was it not a simple matter to restore the old state of things, so soon as Mr. Drummond got well? The girl spoke as if she were about to fulfil some doom of perpetual banishment from all she had ever known and loved.

So it was arranged, before Sir Actor and Mrs. Warrener left, and after a brief word with Mr. Dowse, who was indeed that Violet should go up to her father's house on the following Saturday, and go over to visit her friends in the south in the evening. In the meantime, she promised Mrs. Warrener she would write a letter to Mr. Drummond.

It was a long letter, of which no word shall be spoken here. To the invalid lying there on his couch, haunted by dreams of the past and all that might have been, it was a sacred revelation, which no eye but his ever read. It was the story, told in tender phrases enough, but loyally honest and outspoken as the soul of her who penned it, of the simple, sincere, and enduring love that filled a woman's heart—of a love that was likely to remain there until the pulse

of the heart itself were stilled by the gentle hand of death.

And then that night. She was to be over at eight o'clock; but he had a secret fancy she might come before the time; and as he sat up on the couch, his back propped by a cushion, he pretended to be talking cheerfully to his sister and niece; but he was in reality listening for the sound of wheels outside. Many a time he had listened in like manner, even when he knew that his fancies were all in vain; and many a time, though he mourned for her as dead, he had imagined the door to open, and he had seen a vision of the fair young girl entering, with her shy smile, her tender eyes, her gracious presence. Was it now a real flesh-and-blood Violet that was coming—no phantom from the shadowy halls of Death, but Violet herself, the frank, generous, courageous girl who had won the heart of all the sailors on board the *Sea-Pyot*?

"I wish," said he, seriously, to his sister, "I wish there was none of that confounded green in this dressing-gown. She always hated green in any costume."

"She won't think about your costume, I imagine," his sister said. "Perhaps you would like a white tie, since a young lady is coming to sup with you?"

"A white tie? No," he said, absently (he was really counting the minutes as they passed, and listening intently), "I do not know what impressions are produced by a white tie; but they are real and mysterious. . . . If you meet a waiter in the street, you cannot tell who he is; but his face haunts you. . . . You know there is something wanting to complete the portrait—you could identify him if that were present. A butler out of livery in the street is a very strange-looking person—the dignity of his manner is irreconcilable with a billycock hat—"

He looked again at his watch, hanging upon the wall. It was a trifle past the half-hour.

"How long is it since Violet was over here?" he asked.

"About six months now," said Mrs. Warren.

"A great deal has happened in that half year. It seems longer than half-a-year—there is so much distance in it, the sense of distance you get from death. Violet has been quite close by all this time; and yet she seems to be coming back to us from a far country—farther away than any on the other side of the sea—and one could almost imagine she will look strange and unfamiliar—"

He stopped; for they could hear outside the sound of wheels approaching. Presently that sound ceased. Amy Warren jumped up, and flew out of the room; her mother followed her. James Drummond was left alone.

And now he looked at the door; for he knew who would open it next. He was weak and ill; perhaps that was why the wasted frame trembled so. Then the door was gently opened; and Violet, tall, pale, her eyes streaming with tears, appeared. For an instant she stood motionless, trying to collect herself before approaching the invalid; but the first glimpse she got of the shattered wreck lying before her caused her to utter a quick, sharp cry of agony, and she threw herself on her knees beside him, and wound her arms round him, for the first time, as she cried, in the bitterness of her heart—

"My darling, my darling, it is not too late!"

"No, not too late," he answered, solemnly. "Whether it be in this world, or in the greater world that lies ahead. . . . Violet, give me your hand."

She raised herself for a moment, and their eyes were fixed on each other—his clear, and calm, and earnest; hers troubled, and dark, and full of an agonised tenderness. He held out his right hand to her; and she placed her right hand in his; and there was no need of any further words between these two, then or thereafter, during the time that was left to them to be together.

To be continued.

ATTIC ORATORS.¹

HARDLY any part of ancient life seems to offer so many points of contact and living interest to the moderns as Greek oratory, whether we consider the importance of the social and political conflicts in the midst of which it arose and was developed, or the literary effect of the prose style, first perfected by the earlier Greek orators, handed on to Cicero, and by him transmitted to modern literature. When thinking of Greek art, we are apt commonly to forget Greek prose, and to dwell most on Greek sculpture and Greek poetry. Of the enduring influence of Greek sculpture it is needless to speak. The influence of Greek poetry is perhaps, in its larger effects, more traceable in the spirit than in the form of the most important modern works of the same order, for the delicate musical effects of metre pass away with the life of the language in which they are born. But the broader and simpler harmonies of prose rhythm are not so easily lost, and these, as first appreciated and elaborated by the Greeks, must live in the ears of men so long as they continue to speak or write prose with any sense of beauty. There is a more obvious affinity between Demosthenes and Burke than between Æschylus and Goethe.

The book before us is the more welcome, as the important subject with which it deals has not hitherto met with a comprehensive treatment at the hands of any English scholar. Mr. Jebb is primarily concerned with the form of the early Greek oratory; in other words, as he constantly repeats, with the development of Greek prose in the hands of the Greek orators. "The oratorical branch of Attic prose," to quote his preface, "has a more direct

and more fruitful relation to the general development than modern analogies would suggest. To trace the course of Athenian oratory from its beginnings as an art to the days of its decline is, necessarily, to sketch the history of Greek prose expression in its most widely influential form, and to show how this form was affected by a series of causes, political or social." Secondly, the book is intended "to supply an aid to the particular study of the Attic orators before Demosthenes," a separate and minute treatment being given only to Antiphon, Andocides, Lysias, Isocrates, and Isæus. "The period thus specially determined," adds Mr. Jebb, "has more than a correspondence with a practical need: it has an inner unity, resting on grounds which are stated in the introduction, and which are illustrated at each stage of the subsequent inquiry."

No one who is acquainted with the general qualities of Mr. Jebb's scholarship, his striking rhetorical power and command of expression both in the classical languages and in English, will be surprised at his having chosen so congenial a theme. On taking up the book we were prepared for much delicate insight into the varieties of style, and much brilliant handling of the Greek originals, and we were not disappointed. The work is that of a scholar with a rare appreciation of language and a noble enthusiasm for Greek. The scope of Mr. Jebb's book is a different one from that of Blass's *Attische Beredsamkeit*, one of those admirable handbooks the production of which is a main characteristic of modern German scholarship. He does not aim at such fulness of detail as Blass, or at such a workmanlike completeness. Had he done so, he would probably have frightened away a great number of readers. For treatises like that of Blass

¹ *The Attic Orators, from Antiphon to Isæus*, by R. C. Jebb, M.A., Professor of Greek in the University of Glasgow. Macmillan and Co., 1876.

are addressed to scholars only, and what they gain in solidity, fulness, clearness, and breadth of conception, they lose in general attractiveness and effect. Mr. Jebb's aim is to produce a book accessible to the general literary public as well as to students of Greek. His attitude is as much that of the modern literary critic as of the professional scholar. And his literary gifts are such as entirely to justify his adopting this point of view. His style is elaborate and distinguished, and the translations from the Greek with which the book abounds are classical, and often brilliant. And, as might be expected, many interesting suggestions are thrown out in the course of the discussion.

A minute examination of the details of the subject, and of Mr. Jebb's treatment of them, would be out of place in these pages, and we therefore propose to do no more than follow, with such remarks as may be suggested, the main idea which he endeavours to work out.

"The relation between ancient oratory and ancient prose, philosophical, historical, or literary," says Mr. Jebb, "is necessarily of the closest kind. Hence our unfortunate word 'oratory,' with its arbitrary and perplexing associations, is a standing impediment to clearness of view. The proposition will be more evident if it is stated thus: In Greek and Roman antiquity, that prose which was written with a view to being *spoken* stood in the closest relation with that prose which was written with a view to being *read*. Hence the historical study of ancient oratory has an interest wider and deeper than that which belongs to the study of modern oratory. It is that study by which the practical politics of antiquity are brought into immediate connection with ancient literature." Here we are brought directly upon the characteristic attribute of Greek literature; its constant and living relation to the spoken word. We often merely read where the Greeks talked or recited. Greek poetry was half music, meant for singing or recital on or off the stage; the main instrument of Greek philosophical speculation was talking, and its

best literary exposition the dialogue: even the best Greek history is penetrated by the influence of poetry and rhetoric, and the form of the prose period was determined by the exigencies of cultivated speaking. The prose period, to be perfect, had to appeal directly or indirectly to the ear, and thus (to quote Mr. Jebb again) "ancient oratory is a fine art, an art regarded by its cultivators and by the public as analogous to sculpture, to poetry, to painting, to music, and to acting. This character is common to Greek and Roman oratory, but it originated with the Greeks, and was only acquired by the Romans."

In taking up this ground, Mr. Jebb is only insisting on the obvious facts which force themselves upon the notice of any student of antiquity. We are not always able to agree with him in the details of the arguments with which he supports his position, but we follow him in the main with pleasure and assent. But when he goes on to draw out a supposed analogy between Greek oratory and Greek sculpture, his treatment of the subject becomes, we think, less clear, and consequently less happy. To bring out his point, Mr. Jebb starts by comparing, in some of their main features, the characteristics of Attic as opposed to modern oratory. "The broadest characteristic of modern oratory, as compared with ancient, is the predominance of a sustained appeal to the understanding. . . . Long and elaborate chains of reasoning, or expositions of complicated facts, have been the very essence of the great efforts and triumphs of modern (English?) oratory; the imagery and the pathos heighten the effect, but would go a very little way if the understanding of the hearers had not, in the first place, been convinced." Is this so? The English are very probably less emotional, less susceptible to temporary excitement, than the Greeks and Romans; but, *mutatis mutandis*, the main effects and the main requirements of oratory, as such, seem to us to be the same all the world over. The orator works to a certain extent, of course, by his appeal to the

reason, but to a far greater extent by his appeal to the feelings; there is and always will be a difference between having one's feelings moved by eloquence and one's reason convinced by argument. It would be true to say that speaking, in the modern conditions of life, has far less influence than writing; that is only saying that we have less need of orators and oratory than the ancients. But where oratory does move us, it moves us as it did the Greeks and Romans, by bringing into prominence, not those facts, or parts of facts, which convince the reason, but those which appeal to the moral emotions. The orator still speaks to the ear and the feelings, not to the understanding and the eye. And wherever this is done we find, so far, a return to the Greek feeling and method. A simple, harmonious, and impassioned prose is still the natural growth of the genuine oratorical habit. Mr. Bright is probably the greatest of living English orators, and certainly no other living English orator has his sincerity and intensity of style. The natural conditions of oratory are much the same among us as among the Greeks. But its outward circumstances are different. We have no continuous oratorical tradition as the Greeks had, no elaborate handbooks and histories and avowed cultivation of rhetoric, no mutual influence of oratory and literature; had this been so, the history of English prose would have been other than it is. But all this is due, not to our expecting from the speaker, as such, anything very different from what the Greeks expected, but to the altered circumstances of our times, and the comparatively small part which oratory plays among us. Indeed Mr. Jebb seems to give up the point for which he is contending when, later on, on p. cvi., he quotes with approval the words of Brougham: "Changing a few phrases, which the difference of religion and of manners might render objectionable—moderating, in some degree, the virulence of invective, especially against private character, to suit the chivalrous courtesy of modern hostility—there is hardly one of the political and forensic

orations of the Greeks that might not be delivered in similar circumstances before our senate or tribunals."

And so when Mr. Jebb, in comparing Burke with Demosthenes, says that "Demosthenes is a sculptor, Burke a painter," he seems to us to miss the real point of the matter, which is that the difference in style between Burke, or any other great modern orator, and Demosthenes, is not one of kind, but of degree; that much the same method would be observed now as in the time of Demosthenes by an orator of equal power, but that the conditions of modern thought, style, habits, language, are different. Especially should it be remembered, when we are comparing the style of the great Greek and of the great English orators, that the conditions of modern English are quite different from those of ancient Greek. In Greek the words, as a rule, convey their full meaning, and require but little addition to give them their effect. The collocation of the words, the rhythm of the period, produced the chief part of the impression. If, on the other hand, a rhetorical effect is to be produced in English, where many of the words are metaphors worn dead, we require, as well as a musical rhythm, a free employment of fresh metaphor and adornment. But the process of the art is the same, it is only the material that is changed. Demosthenes is the highest type of the matured Greek civil oratory; and Demosthenes, according to Mr. Jebb in another place (vol. ii. p. 416), is a "prophet." In other words, his manner is as much Hebrew as Greek; "things stronger than blood give him his affinity with Jeremiah and Ezekiel;" and it is precisely in this that "Demosthenes, the master, can make his art obey him." A strong testimony, surely, that in the matter of oratory the universal laws are stronger than particular circumstances, and that its power and effect are derived at all times from the same natural springs, the form alone being the changeable element.

"Sudden bursts, and the shock or the transport which they may cause, were

forbidden to ancient oratory by the principal law of its being." This is probably too sweeping a statement. It should be remembered that the chief sources of our knowledge of the effects of Greek oratory are the works of professed critics, like Cicero, Dionysius, and Quintilian, whose business it is to treat the theory of rhetoric, and who are naturally not concerned with recording sudden impressions. It is difficult to suppose that sudden bursts were unknown to Greek oratory. Quintilian says (10, 7, 13) "that there are occasions when no preparation will produce so great an impression as an extemporary burst." At those times the old orators used to say that the speaker was inspired (*deum adfuisse dictitabant*). Little mention would, of course, be made of such moments in formal treatises. In comparing the effects of Greek and of modern oratory two facts should be borne in mind: on the one hand, that the moderns have no systematized canons of theoretical criticism, and that modern oratory is judged by its immediate effectiveness, not by the comparative prominence of the artistic element on which scholars love to dwell; on the other hand, that we have few if any means of estimating the effects of Greek oratory on the ordinary Greek listener. Had this been otherwise, probably much of the apparent difference between the two phenomena would disappear.

Proceeding to compare Greek with Roman oratory, Mr. Jebb makes some observations, from which, being unable to agree with them, we quote somewhat fully.

"Greek oratory, as compared with Roman, has a stamp of its own. It is separated from the Roman, not indeed by so wide an interval, yet by a line as firm, as that which separates both from the modern. That character which, with special modifications, belongs to every artistic creation of the Greek mind, whether this be a statue, a temple, a poem, a speech, or an individual's conception of his own place in life, is usually, and rightly, called the plastic" (p. xciii.). . . "Greek art expressed itself

in sculpture rather than in painting" (p. xcvi.). . . "The place held in antiquity by sculpture is now held jointly by painting, music, and certain forms of poetry" (p. xciii.). . . "This character of sculpture belongs also to Greek tragedy. But this is not, as seems sometimes to be imagined, because the Greeks sought to make tragedy like sculpture, it is because that tendency of intellect and feeling, for which sculpture happened to be a peculiarly apt expression, set its necessary stamp equally on everything else that the Greek mind created" (p. xcvi.). . . "When it is desired to describe the primary artistic aspect of Greek tragedy, this is commonly and justly done by a comparison with sculpture. But it is certain that comparatively few understand the real meaning of 'plastic,' 'sculpturesque,' in these relations; and that to a vast majority of even cultivated persons, the statement of this affinity conveys an altogether erroneous notion. . . . When people are told that Greek tragedy (for example) is sculptural, they form this idea of it, that it has grandeur, but that it is cold and rather stiff" (p. xciii.). The "plastic" character of Greek tragedy rather consists in the poet's fixing his regard "on the permanent, divine characteristics of the human type, and not suffering minor accidents, or unrulinesses, or griefs so to thrust themselves forward as to mar the symmetry of the larger view. True simplicity is not the avoidance, but the control, of detail. In Sophokles, as in great sculpture, a thousand fine touches go to that which, as the greatest living creator in fiction has proved, he can still help to teach, the delineation of the great primary emotions" (p. 100.). . . "Since, as has been seen, oratory was for the Greeks a fine art, it follows that Greek oratory must have, after its own kind, that same typical character which belongs to Greek sculpture and to Greek tragedy" (p. ci.).

It is obviously true that the spirit which produced the great Greek literature was akin to that which produced the great Greek sculpture; but much of the exclu-

sive attention which we pay to Greek sculpture is due to the accident that stone is a durable material, and that ancient work in marble has survived where painting and music have perished. When modern criticism dwells on the "marble form and outline" of Greek literature, it is forgotten, for one thing, what a large part in Greek statuary was played by metal work. It is forgotten also that painting was an art at least as characteristic of the Greeks as sculpture; and besides, that neither painting nor sculpture was considered by the best Greek critics as of anything like the same importance in their character and effects as music and poetry. Greek criticism is constantly drawing analogies and illustrations from painting and sculpture; so much we readily concede to Mr. Jebb; but, as far as we can see, these arts were not recognised as having any intimate relation with, or direct bearing upon, the mental and moral forces which work in action, speaking, and writing. It is to Greek poetry and music, rather than to Greek sculpture, that we should look for analogies in treating of ancient oratory. No one admired the Greek orators more than Cicero; and Cicero also recognised sculpture as a distinctively Greek art, admitting that he himself, like many other Romans, had but little taste or knowledge in it. It would have been natural, therefore, for Cicero to have connected the supreme excellence of the Greeks in literature with their pre-eminence in sculpture; yet, as far as we know, there is no hint in his writings of such a supposed connection. Among the Greeks, as among the great nations of modern times, one form of mental and moral activity generated or encouraged another; but the prominence which modern criticism gives to Greek sculpture would probably not have been conceded by the Greeks themselves. Could any magic awaken for us the voice of Greek music, and reveal its relations to Greek poetry, it might be found that modern critics, in fixing upon sculpture as the most distinctive and typical production of

Greek art, had missed a whole range of suggestive analogies.

There is so far an analogy between sculpture and poetry that both, being products of the imagination, can draw our eyes to contemplate ideal types and great situations. But the greater part of an orator's work, even if it lie in the higher regions of practical activity, is occasional only, and in any case he has to deal, not with types, but with realities. The scope of his creative powers is different altogether from that which is open to the sculptor or painter or poet. His material is more limited; his imagination not being free, it is seldom possible for him to produce the effects of grandeur and repose which are their legitimate aim. While poetry therefore stands in a close relation, from different sides, both to oratory and to sculpture, oratory and sculpture are comparatively remote from each other, and attempts to draw out close analogies between them are apt to be misleading.

For where, we may ask, is the "plastic" element most clearly to be discerned in Greek oratory? According to Mr. Jebb, in two points: first, in the development of a series of types "by a series of artists, each of whom seeks to give to his own type the utmost clearness and distinction that he is capable of reaching." Secondly, in the character of the individual orations, in which "everything bears on the matter in hand," and "wherever pity, terror, anger, or any passionate feeling is uttered or invited, this tumult is resolved" (in the great majority of cases) "in a final calm." The same might surely be said, *mutatis mutandis*, of another great art which is not usually considered to stand in any close relation with sculpture, we mean modern music. An oratorio of Handel's or a symphony of Beethoven's is a type of an individual series, and the complexities of the feelings to which it gives expression are usually resolved, if not into a "final calm," at least into the repose of triumph; indeed, the spirit of art is the same in all times and places.

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ductions, and not least in their oratory, that incomparable sense of simplicity, beauty, and fitness of means to ends which is the wonder of the world; but we still think that the main characteristics of Greek oratory and the development of Greek prose might have been the same had no Greek sculptor ever carved a single statue.

And here we are led on to consider Mr. Jebb's remarks on the difference between Greek and Roman oratory. "The main reason of the superiority of Greek practical oratory to Roman is," he says, "its business-like character." Cicero has too great a tendency to wander from the point into mere display: "no Greek orator could have delivered such a speech as that of Cicero for Archias, or for Publius Sextus" (*Sestius*?). We doubt whether Mr. Jebb does full justice to the merits of Roman eloquence; the speeches for Archias and Sestius are hardly types of Cicero's best style. It will probably be found in most cases that where Cicero leaves the point there is some reason for it, either in the badness of his case, or in the fact that other interests are involved which justify digression. Cicero is diffuse and flowery; but of many of his forensic speeches, for instance, the Verrines (which, be it remembered, would all have been spoken, had not the first been too successful), the *Pro Cæcina*, *Pro Cluentio*, *Pro Roscio Amerino*, it cannot be said that they are not to the point. In his political, or quasi-political speeches, the case is sometimes otherwise, for an obvious reason, that Cicero is virtually dealing, not merely with the particular subject before him, but with a whole situation, in which his own dubious and fluctuating conduct requires explanation or defence. In the speeches *Pro Lege Manilia*, *De Lege Agraria*, and *Pro Rabirio Perduellionis Reo*, he shows that he is quite able to keep to the matter in hand.

"In the days of the great Roman eloquence," says Mr. Jebb, "Rome had no political rival. Her discipline and her manners contributed with her civic security to exempt her citizens from

sudden and violent emotion. What Claudian afterwards happily called the *vita Romana quies* already prevailed." But if Rome was exempt from foreign rivalry (and in granting this we have to forget the Social War and Mithridates), how did things stand within her own walls? Cicero or Caesar would, we suspect, have been surprised at Mr. Jebb's description of their surroundings. Few periods of history have been so full of trouble and confusion as the last century and a half of the Roman republic. It was in the conflicts of that stormy time, the passions and movements of which are mirrored in its whole literature, that Roman eloquence was born and developed. Much of the spirit of his age is reflected in the keen insight, vehement impulsiveness, fragmentary patriotism, and irresolute melancholy of Cicero; how much more should we have known and felt of the capabilities of Roman oratory and its relation to Roman politics, had more than a few fragments been preserved to give us an impression of the burning intensity of Caius Gracchus and the tragic grandeur of Sulpicius. Yet, granting that Cicero is not an adequate exponent of the best Roman eloquence, he is far more than a mere Roman Isocrates, the rank which Mr. Jebb seems inclined to assign to him. The most hostile criticism cannot deny that his powers as an orator were felt and feared by contemporary statesmen. His advocacy was courted as a weighty assistance by both the great political parties of Rome. His eloquence was a real force in the conflicts of his time; he worked as an orator, not as a pamphleteer. His best energies were given to perfecting Roman eloquence; his literary activity was mainly the result of enforced leisure.

We think, therefore, that Mr. Jebb's criticism, which gives so many indications of fine insight and enthusiasm for his subject, would have been clearer and more coherent had he avoided a somewhat over-rigid application of the formulae of modern criticism. Epithets such as "Greek," "Roman," "modern," "plastic," are, if too hastily or too

comprehensively applied, apt to cramp the freedom of criticism and divert the view of the critic from a historical to a formal view of antiquity. A closer study of the remains of Greek and Roman life (of which, in any case, mere fragments are preserved to us) will probably show that much which a first-hand criticism might be inclined to set down as distinctive of Greece or Rome is due rather to accidental variety of circumstances than to essential differences capable of being summed up in single epitheta.

We have followed Mr. Jebb along the main course of his general introduction, taking by the way such points as seemed to suggest or to require fresh discussion. But it would be unjust to the book to leave off with a negative conclusion. As a specimen of the great positive merits of Mr. Jebb's style and treatment, we may take the excellent summary of the history of Greek rhetoric given in the second volume, p. 419:—

"The ground for an artistic Athenian oratory was prepared partly by the popular dialectic of the eastern sophists, partly by the Sicilian rhetoric. Intermediate between these stood the earliest artist of oratorical prose, Gorgias, differing from the eastern sophists in laying more stress on expression than on management of argument, and from the Sicilian rhetoricians in cultivating his faculty empirically, not theoretically."

"Two principal tendencies appear in the beginnings of Attic oratory. One of these sets out from the forensic rhetoric of Sicily, in combination with the popular dialectic of the sophists, and is but slightly affected by Gorgias. It is represented by the writers of the 'austere' style, of whom Antiphon and Thucydides are the chief. From Thucydides to Demosthenes this manner is in abeyance, partly because it is in itself unsuited to forensic purposes, partly because its grave emphasis has come to seem archaic. The second tendency is purely Gorgian, and after having had several obscure representatives, is taken up by Isokrates, who gives to it a corrected, a complete, and a permanent

form. From a compromise between this second tendency and the idiom of daily life arises the 'plain' style of Lysias. The transition from Lysias to a strenuous political oratory is marked by Isaeos. Then comes the matured political oratory, giving combinations to types already developed, and, in its greatest representative, uniting them all."

Take, again, the following judgment on Lysias and Isokrates:—"Lysias completes the reaction from the poeticism of Gorgias and the stateliness of Antiphon. He boldly takes as his material the diction of the private citizen who has had the ordinary Athenian education; and, being an artist of true genius, Lysias shapes out of this a singularly beautiful prose. The conception was fortunate; it was in essential harmony with the spirit of Attic Greek; and, if a Lysias had not arisen, the world would not have known some most delicate felicities of that idiom. It was a faculty of the language developed once for all, committed to an exquisite record, and thus secured against the possibility of being missed, by any one who hereafter should aim at mastery over all the resources of Attic speech. Nor was the lesson lost on Demosthenes and Hyperides any more than on the Augustan Atticists."

"It might have seemed that a finished simplicity, so congenial to the Attic spirit, had for ever superseded the ideal of Gorgias. But just as the influence of that ideal was declining, a pupil of Gorgias came forward to show that his master's theory, though deformed by extravagances, was grounded in truth. Isokrates proved that, without loss of ease and fluency, prose may be artistically ornate in the general sense of Gorgias (that is, with the aid of certain embellishments proper to poetry), if only these are rightly chosen and are temperately used. The great difference between the work of Lysias and the work of Isokrates is this:—Lysias did perfectly what could be done to such perfection in pure Attic alone; Isokrates did excellently, though not faultlessly, a thing from which the finest instincts of

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Attic Greek were averse, but which, on the other hand, could be reproduced with fair success in any language that was sufficiently flexible and polished. Isokrates sent his influence from Greece into modern Europe by founding a norm of literary prose."

All this is in Mr. Jebb's best manner, and will perhaps give, as well as anything could, a notion of the clearness and elegance with which he can treat the subject of Greek style when he allows himself to write without the trammels of formulæ. His native feeling for the beauties of Greek literature is so keen that he never writes better than when he is following its unassisted light. He has produced a book which shows quite a singular and exceptional power of appreciating and carefully analysing the

form of Greek literature, and which will, we have no doubt, prove a powerful aid to the study of the Greek orators among English scholars. It is by no means creditable to English scholarship that the reading of Lysias and Isocrates has almost entirely dropped out of our school course. A careful perusal of Mr. Jebb's work will probably convince those who have the charge of classical education in England of their mistake in allowing this state of things to continue, and will stimulate them to alter it. With the exceptions which we have attempted to point out—exceptions which do not affect the execution of the main body of the work and the detailed treatment of the individual orators—the book will be found an admirable guide to the higher study of Greek prose.

H. NETTLESHIP.

HISTORIC PHRASES.

UNSUCCESSFUL, or only partially successful, authors are often treated with apparent injustice when, as may happen, their books are not altogether without merit. In that case their works do not wholly perish. Whatever seems good in them is reproduced by some successful author, who does, or does not, put his own distinctive mark upon what he has taken. Not one of the numerous tribe of unsuccessful authors can repay such attentions as these, or he would be held guilty of plagiarism—an offence which can only be committed with impunity by the rich towards the poor, and by the strong towards the weak. Indeed, if an unsuccessful author, from whom a successful one had borrowed, were to make any fuss on the subject, he would probably be condemned as an impostor, and would in any case be told to hold his peace. There is no harm in this so far as regards the general interest of readers. If ideas, expressions, passages, personages, possess value in themselves, their origin need not be too closely inquired into. They belong to him who has used them with most effect, as in the industrial arts inventions belong to those who have known how to apply them. The first discoverer has every right to pity himself, or to be pitted, for being deprived of the honours of his discovery. But if it has been taken into better hands than his, and better presented than he could have presented it, the public are gainers by the transfer, in however arbitrary and even unjust a manner it may have been effected.

Similarly, if the same remarkable phrase has been spoken by two different men, the more celebrated will have the sole credit of it. This habit, however, on the part of the European public of "lending to the rich" may be carried too far. Some measure should be ob-

served; and though a great man may be allowed to borrow, if such be his will, nothing should be given to him which he himself even has never claimed. Care, too, should be taken not only not to give him the property of others, but, in giving him his own, to give it to him in its proper form. When the very words spoken are cited as coming from the man who really spoke them, it is further desirable that their meaning should not be perverted; as may well happen in the case of paradox-makers, whose paradoxes, made thoroughly clear, would often lose all point.

Several historic sayings have been set right ("Tirez les premiers, Messieurs les Anglais," for instance), and others (as "Moriatur pro rege nostro, Mariâ Theresâ,") altogether demolished by Mr. Carlyle; who of others again has exposed the absurdity. The unseemly question put by Le Père Bouhours, as to whether a German can be witty, has drawn down upon him a few replies calculated to make him wish, were he still in the flesh, that he had never raised the inquiry. Mr. Carlyle's answer, however, had really been anticipated by the facetious father himself, who, after asking in *Les Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène*, "Si un Allemand peut avoir de l'esprit?" adds: "Ce n'est pas que je veuille dire que tous les septentrion-neux soient bêtes; il y a de l'esprit et de la science en Allemagne comme ailleurs; mais enfin on n'y connaît point notre bel esprit, ni cette belle science qui ne s'apprend point au collège, et dont la politesse fait la principale partie; ou si cette belle science et ce bel esprit y sont connus, ce n'est seulement que comme des étrangers dont on ne connaît point la langue et avec qui on ne fraye point d'habitude."

Le Père Bouhours is often credited, as are also Dumarsais and Malherbe,

with the "Je m'en vais ou je m'en vas" of the dying grammarian, who goes on to explain that "l'un et l'autre se dit ou se disent."

The number of characteristic stories told of similar persons under similar circumstances is indeed very large. Of Julius Caesar landing in Africa, of William the Conqueror landing in England, of Edward III. landing in France, it is equally narrated that they fell, and to avert all appearance of an evil omen, affected to seize the earth on which they had stumbled.

Henry IV. of France and a certain mayor were so much alike, that the king could not help saying to his counterpart, "Did your mother ever visit our part of the country?" "No," replied the mayor, "but my father did." The same anecdote is related of the Regent Orleans, who stands for Henry IV., and a Scotch gentleman, who replaces the mayor; and the original of both tales is to be found in the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius.

The comprehensive directions given by the Pope's legate at the massacre of the Albigenses, "Tuez tous; Dieu reconnaitra les siens," are also said to have been given at the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Here of course there is a confusion of two different events. But the phrase which belongs to the one is not morally unsuitable to the other, and there is a natural tendency to connect it with the massacre of which most is known. M. Louis Blanc has committed this error in a passage cited without disapproval or even correction by M. Larousse in his *Fleurs Historiques*. Many stories told of the Polish insurrection of 1830 were afterwards told, with but slight variation, of the Polish insurrection of 1863; and the details of the massacre of Scio would fit only too well into a general narrative of the recent massacres in Bulgaria.

The period of the French Revolution abounds in historical phrases. One of the most celebrated of these, the exhortation said to have been addressed at the moment of his death to the king by the Abbé Edgeworth, "Fils de Saint Louis,

montez au ciel!" was never uttered. The abbé, questioned on the subject, did not remember having said anything. If he had spoken, the roll of the drums would have prevented his being heard.

Nor did the Abbé Sièyes, when the king was being sentenced by his judges, write in the register, "La mort sans phrase." The others for the most part appended to the sentence of death a few words setting forth their motives or reasons—such as "Parceque il a trahi." Sièyes, however, wrote simply "La mort," to which was added in *Le Moniteur*, as if to show that nothing had been omitted, "sans phrase."

A well-known historic phrase of this epoch, denied by its reputed author as soon as he saw it in print, but which continues to be attributed to him all the same, is the "Finis Polonia;" supposed to have been pronounced "when Kosciuszko fell." Freedom may have "shrieked" on that occasion, but Kosciuszko did not exclaim "Finis Polonia." In the first place, as he wrote to Count Ségur, who had given publicity to the story in his *Décade Historique*, he was all but mortally wounded, and could not speak. If, however, he had retained the faculty of speech, he would certainly not have had the presumption to exclaim "Finis Polonia," since neither his death, nor the death of any one else, could be for Poland a fatal misfortune. It would be interesting to know who invented "Finis Polonia," which seems to have reached Count Ségur by common report. Kosciuszko repudiated, in any case, both the words and the idea. It may be here mentioned that a celebrated phrase which M. Fournier in *L'Esprit dans l'Histoire* (Paris, 1857), and M. Larousse, in *Les Fleurs Historiques*, both attribute to a writer in the *Journal des Débats*, really belongs to a Pole. Two centuries and a half before "Le roi règne, et ne gouverne pas," was written, John Zamoyksi had said, only too truly, in the Polish Diet, of the Polish King, "Rex regnat, sed non gubernat."

Most of the sayings which pass for Napoleonic did really proceed from

Napoleon, and are to be found in his correspondence or in authentic records of his speeches and conversations. But "Grattez le Russe, vous trouverez le Cosaque" was first said by the Prince de Ligne; and when Napoleon called England "La nation boutiquière," he had been in a measure anticipated by Sir Philip Francis, who, in the debate on the armament against Russia, denounced his countrymen as "a nation of stockjobbers." "Il faut laver son linge sale en famille" was a piece of advice addressed, in a furious speech, to the Chamber of Deputies during the crisis which followed the disasters of 1814. "What is the throne? Four pieces of wood covered with velvet!" exclaimed Napoleon on the same occasion. This was new. But "Wash your dirty linen at home" had been said (as M. Fournier points out) by Voltaire in the very words which Napoleon was afterwards to employ. "In fifty years Europe will be Cossack or Republican" is a very precise forecast, which, if a true one, ought now to be on the point of being verified. Another prediction on the same subject, "Woe to Europe when the Czar of Russia wears a beard!" is less absolute, more mysterious, more picturesque, and finer in every respect. The beard prophecy, moreover, has gained in significance since it was first uttered. The Slavonian and Pan-Slavonian idea had at that time scarcely been conceived, and to Napoleon at St. Helena was certainly unknown. Few even among the Russians had learned that the Poles, the Czechs of Bohemia, the Croats and other Slavonians of Hungary, the Servians and the Bulgarians, were of the same race as themselves. At present, however, if a bearded Czar were to head a great national movement, he would do so not as Emperor of Russia, but as Emperor of the Slavonians. Fortunately, Alexander II. shaves. Central Europe, too, thanks to Napoleon's imperial successor, is more strongly constituted now than it was in 1815.

Napoleon's most characteristic sayings

are more impressive than dazzling, and more Oriental than French. He never troubled himself to manufacture paradoxes such as Talleyrand delighted in. Not, however, that all Talleyrand's paradoxes were original. "Language was given us to disguise our thoughts," like so many witticisms of all kinds, is by right of invention the property of Voltaire; and M. Fournier tells us that before Talleyrand appropriated it, it had been made into an epigram by Lebrun Harel, at that time editor of *Le Nain Jaune*, published it in his journal, and, for the sake of "actuality," assigned it to Talleyrand, who, seeing that it was good, accepted it. Talleyrand, according to Harel's story, was waited upon by an ingenious youth who wished to enter the diplomatic service, and who, to recommend himself, assured the minister that he was in the habit of saying precisely what he thought. Thereupon Talleyrand informs him very gravely that language was given to man to enable him to conceal his thoughts. The becoming manner, by the way, of attaining this end seems to have been indicated by Talleyrand when he remarked, one evening at Holland House, that Cardinal Mazarin "deceived, but did not lie," whereas M. de Metternich he added, "always lied, and never deceived." This was said in presence of Lord Macaulay, and may be found recorded in Mr. Trevelyan's recently published volumes.

M. de Talleyrand was, according to M. Fournier, a constant student of a jest-book in twenty-one volumes entitled *L'Improvisateur Français*, in which, says the author of *L'Esprit dans l'Histoire*, the best joke is the title. Refreshing his memory and fertilising his wit by means of the anecdotes gathered together in his favourite work, Talleyrand was never at a loss for an impromptu. His biographer, M. de Vaulabelle, repudiates some of the sayings generally attributed to him, including the famous comment which he is supposed to have pronounced on the execution of the Duke d'Enghien: "C'est pire qu'un crime, c'est une faute."

On the other hand, he invented, or at least presided at the invention of, a sentence destined to become historical, which was printed as forming part of the speech delivered by the Count d'Artois on receiving the great dignities of state in 1814. The Count had muttered some nearly unintelligible and quite insignificant words. It was necessary, however, to represent him as having said something striking, something worthy of the occasion; and M. Beugnot, who as Minister of the Interior superintended the publication of the *Moniteur*, was requested by Talleyrand to "invent." Beugnot invented first one thing, then another, until at last he delivered himself of a sentence commencing, "Rien n'est changé. Il n'y a qu'un Français de plus . . ." That was enough. Talleyrand finished the sentence at "plus," and the *mot* was made. The Count d'Artois, less candid than Talleyrand would have shown himself in similar circumstances, declared that he did not remember having said anything of the kind. He was reminded, however, that the words were actually in print, that the newspaper could not very well have made a mistake, and so on; and he was ultimately reduced to silence by the repeated congratulations of his friends. Besides being witty himself, Talleyrand is popularly believed to have been the cause of wit, and wit of a diabolical kind, in one who was not much given to satire, even on occasions when satire would have been permissible. Talleyrand having complained on his death-bed that he was "suffering the torments of the damned," "Already?" Louis Philippe is reported to have exclaimed. M. Louis Blanc tells the story as though it were unquestionably true, in his *Histoire de Dix Ans*, and adds, that to revenge himself Talleyrand lost no time in delivering to a friend papers which contained important state secrets. The anecdote, however, was already very old; and one narrator, M. de Lévis, who places in the mouth of a doctor at his patient's bedside the inquiry attributed by M. Louis Blanc to Louis Philippe,

expresses a reasonable doubt as to whether anything so heartless could have been said.

No one seems to have corrected, on the part of Louis Philippe, M. Louis Blanc's account of Talleyrand's last interview with his king. When, however, some one wished to deprive M. Salvandy of a phrase which he had perhaps been at some pains to elaborate, he wrote to the papers on the subject. He declared that at the ball given to the King of Naples immediately before the revolution of 1830, it was he and no one else who said: "The entertainment is quite Neapolitan; we are dancing on a volcano."

Not many months afterwards an announcement was made to the Chamber of Deputies, which when once it had been uttered, its author would gladly, no doubt, have seen placed to the account of anyone but himself. In answer to inquiries as to the condition of affairs in Poland, General Sebastiani informed the Assembly that "order reigned in Warsaw." In our English newspapers these words are usually attributed to the Emperor Nicholas, who is probably supposed to have addressed them to one of the foreign ambassadors at St. Petersburg. They were not indeed very becoming in the mouth of a minister of one of the intervening powers; and it is their very inappropriateness that has caused them to be remembered.

"Order reigns at Warsaw" is the sort of thing the Emperor Nicholas might have said, and the credit of it will doubtless remain with him. It is thought quite natural, too, that Blücher, on viewing London from the top of St. Paul's, should have cried out "What a place to plunder!" According, however, to another version, his words were "My God, what plunder!" in which case he would not have meant that the idea of sacking London had suddenly occurred to his brigand-mind, but merely that he was much struck by the mass of heterogeneous objects around him. The German substantive *plunder* does not signify booty at all.

To return for a moment to the Emperor Nicholas: his comparison of Turkey to a sick man was by no means new. In likening the Ottoman Empire to a sinking patient, he was only repeating to Sir Hamilton Seymour what Sir Thomas Roe, Ambassador from England in the time of James II. at Constantinople, had written home in despatches. "Turkey," said Sir Thomas, "is like the body of an old man crazed with vices, which puts on the appearance of health, though near its end." The main difference between the Turkey of the present day and the Turkey of two centuries ago lies perhaps in the fact that the Ottoman Empire does *not* at this moment present the appearance of health.

The Crimean war produced a certain number of historic phrases, such as "C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre"—cited too often and too complacently; MacMahon's "J'y suis, j'y reste," which only seems to have been remembered since the Marshal's elevation to the highest dignity in France; and the late Prince Gortchakoff's "feu d'enfer" as descriptive of the fire under which the Russians retired from the south of Sebastopol. The English, as usual, contented themselves with deeds. In the British Parliament, however, an expression, which has since become historical, was used by the Duke of Newcastle in reference to the beginning of the war—into which we were said to be "drifting." Like so many other historical phrases, this one in time lost its original meaning, and is now perversely misinterpreted as signifying, not that the negotiations took a course which led gradually to a declaration of hostilities, but that the country fell into a state of war, without guidance, and independently of the wishes of the Government.

Cavour's "Italia fara da se" became strangely celebrated, considering that Italy never did and never could have done anything by herself. It inspired other nations with the idea of "doing by themselves," and unhappy Poland did for itself in the insurrection of 1863. The conscription which pre-

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As a proof of the tendency of things to go wrong, even when deviation from the right course would seem next to impossible, it may be mentioned that at least four different versions of the Emperor Napoleon's letter have been published. In some he lays his sword at the feet, in others, places it in the hands of the Prussian king. In a manuscript copy circulated the night of the battle, not many hours after the receipt of the original, the writer made the Emperor declare himself incapable of dying at the head of his troops. "N'ayant pas su mourir," instead of "n'ayant pas pu mourir," it began; and probably this edition, presenting at least one notable variation from the genuine text, found its way, like so many others, into print.

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If proclamations and letters are falsified in time of war, and falsified so rapidly that incorrect copies get into circulation before the ink of the original document has had time to dry, speeches, sayings, and utterances of all kinds are liable to the same fate in time of peace. In France, and not in France alone, nothing is more generally believed of Prince Bismarck than that he once, in the Prussian Chamber, declared the superiority, or rather the priority, of "might" to "right": "Macht vor Recht," or, as the French put it, "La force prime le droit." Times out of number, Prince Bismarck has written to deny that he ever uttered what in one sense would be a mere truism (since every right is preceded by and based on

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some kind of force), in another a simple barbarism; until at last the very frequency of his contradictions, and the necessity, constantly renewed, of having to make them, has been used as an argument against him. The terrible "blood and iron" through which alone a nation can gain its rights, is known to be an expression borrowed from a German poet, in whose verse it means neither more nor less than—

"Who would be free, himself must strike the blow,"

in O'Connell's favourite couplet.

The saying, attributed to M. Thiers, about the advantages of the Republican form of government in France as "the one which divides us the least," had not, when it was first pronounced the meaning given to it now. M. Thiers, as a Royalist, made the remark, since turned against the monarchical party; and what he said was: "The Republic is the form of government which divides us (the Royalists) the least, and which disunites them (the Republicans) the most." In other words, "Monarchists of all kinds will combine against a Republic; but, a Republic once declared, Republicans will quarrel among themselves." At present the first half of M. Thiers's epigram is alone quoted;

and, true or false, the pointless phrase, as now interpreted, suits the existing situation.

No man of true wit, when a good thing has been given to him, or has even been taken possession of by himself, likes to be afterwards deprived of it for the benefit of the rightful owner. Thus when Mr. Disraeli's eulogium on the Duke of Wellington, including his essay on the character of a general, was shown to M. Thiers, that eminent statesman at once protested that it must be his: "Ça doit être de moi," he exclaimed; though it afterwards turned out to be Armand Carrel's.

Lord Beaconsfield is the author of innumerable phrases which have made their mark. The writer, however, of a very interesting article in a recent number of *Fraser's Magazine* has shown that Mr. Disraeli sometimes "*prenait son bien*," like Molière, wherever he chanced to find it. When Mr. Disraeli called our street cab "the gondola of London," he borrowed the phrase from *Friends of Bohemia*, a wild, brilliant novel by the late Edward Whitty. Mendelssohn, too, had described Cherubini as looking like an "extinct volcano" long before Mr. Disraeli discovered in the House of Commons a whole row of "extinct volcanoes."

H. SUTHERLAND EDWARDS.

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THE WAGNER FESTIVAL AT BAYREUTH.

It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast than that suggested by the performance of the *Flying Dutchman*, now drawing in its English dress crowded audiences to the Strand, and that of the *Ring des Nibelungen*, as given in August last to a select artistic circle at Bayreuth. The former—though not without characteristic touches which make it quite an example of the first original manner of an artist whose style is as “personal” in music as that of Turner in painting—may be said to be so far like the operas of elder composers, that it can in a measure be comprehended and estimated at a single hearing; just as it was written and composed during a single episode of the composer's life, and under the influence of a single inspiration. Not so with the latter; poem and music alike are the mature result of the entirely conscientious labour of thirteen years. Consider then, during so prolonged an incubation, what varied and distracting elements must replenish the storehouse of mental experience which is the true alembic of an author's works. The Horatian rule had indeed been abundantly observed; how many times must the poem itself have been revised (as we know that it was), the characters recast, the instrumentation rescored. Would only that the pen had been more freely drawn across the ample page! Yet, anyhow, most unjust would it be to accept as final, amid the strife of party and prejudice, the verdict of the hour, either for or against. The advice of the editors of the first Shaksperian Folio is pregnant in this instance, as in so many others: “Read him, therefore, and again, and again, and if then you do not like him, surely you are in great danger not to understand him.” These words will assure the reader doubtless that the present humble chronicler is by predilection and education Wagnerian: first loves are proverbially precious; long before

the name of Wagner was recognised at all in musical English circles—long before a note of his music had been heard in English concert-rooms—the writer was by peculiar circumstances made familiar with *Rienzi*, *Lohengrin*, and *Tannhäuser*, and had gained some idea of the tendencies which were drawing the composer into open war with all the creeds of music. But it was with an absolute intention to retain his judgment unbiased that he betook himself to Bayreuth. In truth, very admiration of the nascent youth of genius renders the approach to the study of its adult manhood a task of as much pain as pleasure, of as much apprehension as expectation; of intense hope no doubt, but of a hope tempered always “with a very wholesome and Christian-like fear.”

The first impression left on the mind was one of utter astonishment; the writer found himself suddenly landed amongst a very Noah's-ark company of fellow-pilgrims; English and American, polished and bohemian, German enthusiasts and French sceptics, in a primitive, out-of-the-way corner, to which Ammergau alone offers a parallel, for the nonce converted into an artistic centre, instinct with a kind of subdued holiday aspect, and an *under-protest* atmosphere of excitement; and for four days his mind was abandoned to a whirl of new ideas, which it will take months duly to digest.

Here was a realization of an idealist's dream; so utterly alien to the spirit of the nineteenth century, as commonly understood, that it will ever remain a marvel how a band of disciples could have been collected round the master to carry it into effect. Yet the miracle, long postponed, has been performed; never in the present writer's opinion to be repeated. *Der Ring des Nibelungen* has been heard in its integrity, and probably will never be so heard again.

It is a further illustration of the extraordinary activity and perseverance of the German nation; it could not have been possible to any other that a theatre should have been erected, that a whole body of leading artists should *give their services* and labour for well-nigh three months, adequately to represent a work of extraordinary difficulty and exaggerated peculiarities, purely, it would seem, from the love of art and the Fatherland. Let this fact be taken into consideration by any one who wishes to understand the subject.

One word, before passing to the consideration of the subject-matter of the great demonstration, on the mode of performance. There is but one adjective suitable to describe the orchestra, —*perfect*: the Wagnerian device of sinking it, partly under the stage and partly in front of it, was in effect absolutely successful; in the *Rheingold* it appeared to want power, and to be too uniformly subdued; but the subsequent days showed that this was due to the subdued and sombre music of the piece, and not to the peculiar arrangements referred to. Unfortunately, as to so many of the most striking features of this festival, so to this the only objection is: *its impracticability*; the sufferings of the instrumentalists were very great; and as we cannot expect artists to become impassive martyrs to art, we may fairly consider that the experiment will not be repeated, and that we are not likely to hear again a work in which singers and orchestra were alike, and never unfairly, predominant, in which every word from the stage was audible by a spectator really familiar with the text; and every little detail of the "accompaniments" (a misnomer by the by) served to fill up the sound-waves with which the modern dramatic school delight to fill the hearer's ear. The actors were good throughout; brilliant in one or two cases, beyond criticism in one. The ladies unquestionably carried off the palm, and for the simple reason that there is far more of definite melody allowed by Wagner to his women than

to his men. Hence it happens always that the tenor, which is as usual the leading male voice, is never heard to the best advantage, except in the impassioned love scenes where the poet rises above the theorist, and nature predominates (even in Wagner) over art. Very few of the men at Bayreuth sang always in tune; Betz as Wotan was at times painfully the reverse; and no wonder; for three days he bore the labour and heat of the piece with but small share in the impassioned moments which gave Niemann as Siegmund and Ungar as Siegfried their opportunities. But one and all *acted well*. Once you threw yourself into the romantic atmosphere of the play, the illusion was never broken by the inefficiency of the performers as actors; apprehension, action, *ensemble* were alike admirable. The Wagner theory condones a false note, but never a false action or a wrong conception of character; the recitative treated in accordance with his theory is as nearly an approach to recitation, sometimes even to speaking, as possible; the cadence is an imitation of that of the human voice, varied not to suit the ear of the musician, but in exact accordance with the sentiment and the situation; very loose singing was evidently *permitted* during the duller levels of the action: the auditor, if wise, would then concentrate his eyes on the stage, and his ears on the orchestra, and leave the voice to take care of itself till nobler moments came.

One performer, Frau Materna, of Vienna, brought to the part of the Walküre Brünnhilde a combination of the rarest gifts—a splendid voice, absolutely true intonation, and consummate powers of acting: it was the universal verdict at Bayreuth that her performance was quite beyond criticism, and that it would be impossible to find another artiste in Europe as equal to the part as she is. Tietjens would, when her powers as well as her art were unimpaired, have disputed the palm with Materna, but I doubt if she could have surpassed her. It is perhaps the most varied and poetic *rôle* yet given to

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dramatic singers; but the adequate interpretation requires genius, and in Materna it was found to a degree scarcely suspected by the most fervent of her German admirers. With such a theme, however, as that of the Nibelunglied, the unique orchestra and the singularly powerful caste would have been inadequate, unless the *mise-en-scène* and stage arrangement had been in keeping with the romantic character of the story; and by years of preparation and the most patient rehearsals, an *ensemble* on the stage was by the third series of performances so perfected, that except in one or two impossible moments the illusion was never broken, and the most refined taste always gratified. It was not so much the scenes themselves, delightful though they were, and quite worthy of their designer, Hoffmann, of Munich, as the accessories, the grouping of form and colour, and the thousand small details which merely leave the unprofessional spectator satisfied, but which require some knowledge of the stage to be duly appreciated. At Bayreuth, by ingenious combinations of colours projected on steam, the gentlest gradations of light and shade were obtained, exquisite combinations through all the varied light-tones from morning to night; clouds, lightning, moonlight, really illusive instead of ludicrous—details absolutely necessary indeed to the due setting forth of an heroic picture, but none the less difficult of attainment. It must be admitted that the final scene—when the Rhine flows up to the doors of the hall of the Gibichings, and castle and pyre and Walhalla and almost the whole world burns out in an indistinguishable ruin—had to be imagined, and was not represented; and that the fights with the dragon, and the magic changes of Alberich were simply ludicrous burlesques; but we were more astonished that Wagner permitted them in the libretto than that they failed to be impressive on the stage. In fact we consider that the marvellous element, though not excessively introduced, was both poetically and strategically a blot. In this

point only Wagner seems to have reverted from the Lied itself to the older form of it in the Helden-buch, and to have erred in doing so. Neither words nor music were ever strongest in the superhuman parts of the story; it is in the drawing and colouring of human strife and passion that he rises to his highest—higher, we believe, than any other composer. One notable exception must be made; it occurs when Wotan rides in offended majesty on the storm-cloud to chide the Walküre Brünnhilde for defending Siegmund, whom the god at Fricka's instance has doomed; the passage describing the advent of the deity is wonderful, only paralleled by a similar one in *Elijah*, well-known no doubt to all our readers.

And now, at the risk of wearying the reader, I must endeavour to sketch shortly and intelligibly the main story of the *Ring* itself, for often as it has been told already, it has scarcely yet been given so that he who runs can read. It is altogether a fairy tale as it stands at first sight, and as a fairy tale we will tell it—only premising that the reader (who wishes to dive readily into something of the hidden source and meaning) must refer again to the well-known article by Carlyle, which appeared years ago in *Fraser's Magazine*, and now figures in his *Miscellanies*.

In the old days when gods were plentiful and men were scarce, when the strife between the deities of the height and depth, of light and darkness, was maturing, there lived in the cloud-land below the earth a prince, Alberich, hideous of form and character, in whose heart wrestled conflicting powers of passion and ambition. One fine summer night he chanced, in a lonely valley of the Rhine, to surprise, sporting on its waters, the three Rhine-maidens whose function from furthest eld was to guard a hidden treasure of gold, which, once unburied, would bring destruction to gods and men.

He was no beauty, we have said, and as he spoke to them of love, they laughed, and scorned him; but from their lips he lightly learned the secret

of the gold; and, when the first rose-tint of morn lighted the glittering hoard in the Rhine-depths, he made off with a tiny fragment, from which he fashioned a ring, which, as its guardians had idly told him, would give him all power over nature, and nature's imp-children who lived in Nibelung-land, below the earth.

Bitter ruth came with the tidings of the theft to the lazy gods, who, sitting idly beside their nectar, were only occupied with rearing a mighty palace called Walhalla; but the craft of the Fire-god was equal to the stratagem, and by his aid Wotan, the Thunderer, wrested the ring from Alberich, and back went the twain in triumph to their home in the heavens.

But ill-gotten goods are as easily lost by gods as by men; the ring, and much more treasure of gold and magic which appertained to it, they had full soon to pay to certain giants who had built them their Walhalla; and again the ring changed owners, and (freighted now with an awful curse of death and ruin to all who should own it) passed into the hands of the Gog and Magog of Saxon legend, Fafner and Fasolt. The curse worked at once. Whilst quarrelling over the booty, Fafner slew his brother Fasolt, and himself sacrificed life and happiness to guard, under the form of a mighty dragon, the booty which he had so foully won. Too late did the gods learn that unless they recovered the ring their power was gone. But henceforth Wotan's only cares were, how to win it back from the giant, and how to fill his halls with warriors to battle for Walhalla when its doomday should come. He formed a band of divine women-spirits called Walkyrie, who fought beside men on earth, and ever, when a hero died, bore the brave soul to Walhalla. He wandered disguised in the world to beget, if it might be, of his own proper person, a redeemer, half-god, half-man, to rescue men and gods from ruin by a power which alone is stronger than gold—the power of love.

Meanwhile, the arch-child of evil,

Alberich, and his brother Mime (a dwarf), were also well aware of their need of this wonderful ring, and they too, as restless spirits, went up and down on earth, founding a family of men to carry on the conflict with the descendants of Wotan.

And first of all the battle royal was fought out between a son of Wotan's named Siegmund, and of Alberich's named Haagen, much to the discomfiture of the former, whose home was burnt, and whose sister, Sieglinde, was carried off to Haagen's wood-dwelling, somewhere in the great land of "No-Man."

Hither came the wandering Wotan, leaving hidden in an ash-stem which supported the roof of the hut, a mighty sword for Siegmund when he should come there in his flight; which indeed he presently did, and duly recognised not only his sword, but also his sister, Sieglinde, whom in the possible fashion of patriarchs he straightway carried off and made, then and there, his wife.

A pretty scandal this for Wotan's goddess-spouse, Fricka! which she quickly turned to account; and hoping at one stroke to be rid of all Wotan's chance offspring, persuaded him to swear that in the coming fight between Haagen and Siegmund the latter should be slain. It was a cruel promise, but Wotan was bound to observe it; and he forthwith instructed his favourite Walküre Brünnhilde, in spite of all her persuasions (for she knew well his real wish), to befriend Haagen, and leave Siegmund to his fate. It happened then that as Siegmund was hastening to meet his enemy, carrying his poor wife, expecting a son, and nigh unto death, there appeared to him in half-trance the terrible dark form of the Walküre to warn him of his coming doom. He pleaded very hard, and alleged, truly enough, that Wotan had treated him badly; and in fine he persuaded Brünnhilde (who was half-woman in tenderness at the bottom of her heart) to assist him when the great duel should be fought.

And by and by, we see Siegmund

and Haagen fighting for dear life on a far off mountain pass; Brünnhilde's shield shelters Siegmund, and the invincible sword has all but done its work, when down comes the great thunder-god, in terrible wrath, and strikes up the hero's guard, so that Haagen kills his foe after all.

Of course, poor Brünnhilde has to suffer for her disobedience, and in this wise, that she is made a woman instead of a Walküre, and is put into a long trance on a great rock, like the sleeping princess, to be awoken by any man who should find her. But of this more anon. Henceforth the story follows the fortunes of Siegfried, the real hero, whose mother, Sieglinde, dies when he is born, and who is brought up by the Nibelung Mime in a wretched home on the borders of the great forest in No-Man's-Land. How he tames birds and beasts, and forges afresh the invincible sword of his father; how he slays the dragon, and wins the ring, and finds Brünnhilde, and makes her his wife, you must read for yourself in the poem, for I should only spoil it. So we will pass on to the final struggle between the descendants of Wotan and of Alberich.

Haagen is now a mighty prince, living with his half-brother and sister in a grand palace on the Rhine; and of course he has heard of the fame of Siegfried, and of the story of Brünnhilde, and knows very well that the ring is now resting as a love token on her finger. And though he is quite aware that neither he nor his brother could win Brünnhilde (because of certain difficulties to which we shall allude hereafter), he thinks that he might by enchantments make Siegfried pass Brünnhilde on to his brother, and with her the ring, and all the power that belonged to it. Well, the very night before chance leads Siegfried to the palace, Alberich appears in a vision to his son, and tells him of the time and the manner in which all this might be done.

And it all turns out as Alberich devises, and quite forgetting his wife,

Brünnhilde, Siegfried, under magic influence, marries Haagen's sister, Guttrune, and forces Brünnhilde to marry the brother, and having sworn a solemn oath of faith and fealty, convicts himself most clearly of perjury, for when the magic power is presently withdrawn, he tells outright at a hunting party the whole story of his life; and this gives Haagen the opportunity to kill him as a liar and perjurer. And it would seem now that the ring will return to the keeping of the Nibelungs, and that the powers of evil will be triumphant. But in fact, the sequel is different; for when, in solemn procession and with dead march and mourning, the body of Siegfried is borne from the hunting-field to the palace, Brünnhilde learns from Guttrune the story of treachery, and determines to leap into the burning pyre on which the corpse is presently laid, with the ring on her finger, which at the last moment she will fling back to the three daughters in the Rhine: and this, indeed, with grand self-sacrifice, she does; and the flames of the pyre rise higher and yet higher, and burn up the Palace of Haagen and reach even to Walhalla itself; and amid the crash of palaces and the wrath of the heavens, the Rhine-daughters appear, singing on the agitated waves of the river, and bear off into its bosom the fatal ring, and Haagen himself, who tries at the last to wrest it from their grasp.

So ends the story, and though nothing much is left at the end, I suppose the moral is, that gold is stronger than the gods, and that love is stronger than gold, and that "the old order changeth, yielding place to the new."

It is a noble legend, and Wagner has done thus much for the fine old mummy, that he has galvanized it again into life—given a purpose to its new being. He has connected fragments, and shaped a long series of tales into a very consistent whole. I think also that the hidden meanings and thoughts which underlie all these distorted shapes of history are more easy to find as he has rewritten it; the struggle of the half-mythic German races—the expression, under the sem-

blance of Gothic myth, of the Christian mysteries and ideas.

Written as it was, part by part, through a long series of years, it is unequal; steadily rising indeed in poetic vein: but for all that it is *as a whole* most remarkable, and singularly harmonious. It will be remembered that, except in a few bursts of passion, rhyme is discarded, and a trochaic *alliterative* form of verse adopted, which suits the peculiar cadence of recitative well, and, from the semblance of sounds, the words in any passage are easy to declaim and exceedingly easy to catch. The extracts which would repay the ordinary German reader occur mainly in the great acts between Siegmund and Sieglinde and Siegfried and Brünnhilde, and in the finer parts of the *Götterdämmerung*. Two instances may be cited as illustrations of the poetic atmosphere which is freely shed over the whole. The first is when Siegmund, really the son of the god Wotan, flies for shelter, as we have said, to the hut where Sieglinde, his sister, is kept in thrall by Hunding, the destroyer of their home. Hunding will not violate the hospitality of his hearth, but challenges his guest to a death-struggle on the morrow; and thus to the hero for whom the sword has been destined by Wotan, the hour of extremest need of it has arrived. Sieglinde has at once conceived a love for the fugitive, and, as he sits brooding over the fire, which is dying down in the hearth, comes down in her snowy night-dress to point out to him the hilt of the mystic weapon in the ash. Her love awakens an answer in his breast, and at this supreme moment the door in the background bursts open, showing a shimmering spring-vista in a wood illuminated by the full splendour of the moon. At once Siegmund breaks out into a strain of true word poetry, wedded to music equally fresh and beautiful:—

“Laughter of spring is heard in the hall;
Anger of winter is hushed at his call;
Splendid and soft are the tresses of May,
Bending breezes bear him by on his way,
Fair field and forest with freshness flow
As the sun of his smile sheds light below;

Of his music the buoyant birds are the birth,
Of his fragrance the blossoms and blooms of
the earth,
His heart heaves in the sap and the spring-
ing seed,
By the grace of his presence the world is
freed.”

It has been said that in the succeeding love-scene the music is almost Swinburnian in lusciousness; and certainly with the singularly exquisite accompaniment, in which the wood and the harp dominate entirely over the strings, and the brass is absent, there is a softness of emotion which heightens the stage effect and the real melody in the voices to the highest pitch, but it is never commonplace and never ignoble, and therefore never sensuous. For I do most thoroughly hold that true music may excite but cannot degrade. Trivial airs with sensual accessories have given to opera bouffe a bad name, but music is not chargeable with the offence. The peculiar vividness of the realism in the final scene of the act, when the sword Nothung (necessity) is drawn from the wood, and the passion of the lovers openly declared, could only have been obtained by a writer who was at once a poet, a dramatist, and a musician. A moonlight effect is as old as the introduction of the limelight, but it would be simply impossible for the most *blazé* spectator to be unaffected by it here, or to sit unmoved during the torrent of musical and verbal painting which brings the curtain down.

A second instance which we would cite is even more fresh and original, and occurs in the act which would be to most audiences the most effective of all, and which at Bayreuth produced a really wild burst of enthusiasm from friend and foes alike—it forms the final scene of Siegfried. When the Walküre Brünnhilde is laid to sleep for her disobedience to Wotan, deprived of her divinity, and reduced to defenceless womanhood; she rests, at her earnest entreaty (forming in itself a fine passage), on a rock surrounded by a sea of fire and flame, so that no one short of the true stature of a hero may

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bend her to his will. So Siegfried—hero-sprout of the god-begotten Sieglinde and Siegmund—reared in the utter solitude of the wild, brought up by the Nibelung Mime (who hoped to win the Rhine gold by his prowess, and by the murder of the heir to enter into the riches and power of the ring), knowing no kind of his own, most ignorant of the form and face of woman; slayer of the dragon, instructed by the fire of its blood to follow where the bird-voice leads through desert and death to win some ineffable companion, some near likeness to his mother, on whose unknown wrongs and feigned figure he broods: he—undaunted by danger, ignorant of fear, unhindered by wrestling with his own god-ancestor—has passed through the flame to the rock where the Walküre sleeps. All clad in armour, covered with the long shield on which of old she bore hero-souls to Walhalla, no longer a Walküre but a mere maiden, she sleeps! What is this form, so unlike the dwarf Mime, unlike the shadow of himself which he has pondered over in the stream? Lift away the long shield, sever the envious joints of the harness, penetrate to the mystery of the womanly robe and the gentle swell of the virgin form:—

"A wonder withers and works in my heart!
With fiery fancies my senses start;
Mother, oh, mother! be near, be near,
To thy fearless son who is fettered by fear."

Readers of Dryden's *Cymon and Iphigenia* will be able to imagine how a poet can paint the ardour and the shrinking, the fervour and the fear, of the youth who has never seen the form or face of woman, but seeing it, is mastered by love and bashfulness—only he must believe that the freshness, the beauty of the situation, is given without the tinge of coarseness which with Dryden was, alas, a necessity. He wakes her of course, as prince ever wakes sleeping maiden, with a kiss; and the waking of Brünnhilde, her horror at her own womanhood and her glory in the fire of Siegfried's manhood, her shrinking and her yielding, her utter abandonment to love at the end, are given in words and music, and with an

absolute wealth of variety in accompaniment, which alone would stamp Wagner as a poet and musician of the highest rank. Moreover nature will have its way, and for the only time throughout the tetralogy, the soprano and tenor are blended in legitimate duet which carries everything before it by its rarity and its richness when it does come.

This is the finest act of the whole work, and we can only bewail the fact that Siegfried is never likely to be represented separately, the story and the motifs of the music being absolutely dependent on the preceding parts.

And now we are bound to consider at such length and with such absence of technicality as befits this journal, the mode in which Wagner the musician has accomplished his self-imposed gigantic task. It is again noticeable that the work was composed at different times, and that therefore there is a progressive style visible in the separate volumes of it. It is however singularly harmonious, a whole designedly and actually, and in his very last manner—the school of *Tristan* and the *Meistersinger*—with little or no reminiscence of *Tannhäuser* or the *Hollander*. Once and for ever vocal concerted music is abandoned as an element, and that by the composer of the march in *Tannhäuser* and the quintet in *Lohengrin*: there are two exquisite female trios for the Rhine daughter; a duet wrested as it were from him in the very climax of the most amorous situation; a chorus for female voices, if it may be so termed, at the Walkyrie rock, really a twelve-part canon of the most eccentric character, depicting with a realism which is little short of marvellous, the wild shouts and equine wailings of those uncanny creatures; a marriage chant at the unnatural bridal of Siegfried and Gertrude, which is as unmelodious though as proportionately descriptive of the situation as can well be. And these form the sum of all departure from the form of accompanied declamation, recitation, on "themic" melody (to coin a phrase) for single voices: for them as far as we can discover, there are not

more than six definite "airs," and those only occur where the action of itself introduces them. There is the bird air, but then birds may be considered to sing, not to speak; Siegfried's forge song, but then he is giving a ballad of set purpose; something very like an *aria* for Sieglinde and again for Brünnhilde, when they may be imagined to have passed all bounds of restraint of common sense; and certain divine utterances of Wotan and Fricka—but, let not the anti-Wagnerian run away with the idea that there is therefore no melody; the melody in the orchestra is indeed inexhaustible, and the particular melody-phrases for the voices (all with set purpose and meaning) most varied and suggestive; but it can never be too much insisted upon that Wagner's sympathies are all with the actor, and not with the singer, and that his years of study of Shakspeare have moulded his mind even more than his allegiance to Beethoven. Moreover, Wagner's is pre-eminently a mind delighting in opposition. As a theorist, a citizen, and a politician alike, he has never been in his element, except when violently opposed to received doctrines, ordinary codes of social observance, recognised authorities. We may be permitted to doubt whether, in his art-work, he has not really done violence to many of his own instincts by the determination to be singular, and thrown overboard, in a spirit of independence, much of the most valuable of his freight. Students of his early operas well know that in concerted music he specially excels—it must have been no small sacrifice to hide this talent in a napkin, and deliberately adopt, to the exclusion of all other vocal melodic-form, his dramatic pearl, the *motif*-principle. The *motif*-principle, then, which is growing on him in *Lohengrin* and the *Meistersinger*, is at last elaborated and brought to maturity in his final and crucial work. Let it be understood that every idea, and passion, and situation, and character, has its individual and separate expression in the assigned *motif*. In the entire work there are no less than ninety of

these *motifs*, and the mode in which they occur, whenever the words, ideas, or development of the characters demand—interwoven, reversed, battling against one another; now in the wood, now on the strings, now with the whole orchestra, now in actual symphony, worked out with theme and coda; now by snatches in the voices—is a marvel and a study. After two days of the four were passed, you might during many bars have shut your eyes, and, by the mere act of listening, have told what the action on the stage must be. Some of these *motifs* are of exquisite beauty, such as those of the Walhalla, the Hero, the Fire, the Rhine-gold; the first soothing and fanciful; the second with a subdued trumpet obligato, the very embodiment of chivalrous feeling; the third with an indistinct shimmer of bells, and whizzing of violins, and a dancing melody for the clarionets, which is just burning and unsatisfying; the fourth a mingled wail and rejoicing, a wonder of suggestiveness. Then there are *motifs* whose very breath is discord, as of the Dragon, and the Tarnhelm, and the Alberich, and the Haagen. There is the *motif* of the forge, with the sound of anvils and the whirr of bellows, simulated by cello and drum and triangle. And the characters themselves are told to you by the sounds which accompany them. It is quite a new art that character should really be drawn by music. No one who was at Bayreuth can doubt that it can be. To describe it in these pages would be difficult and tedious. Let it suffice to say that, by a conventional set of phrases, as it were, and by blending and opposing them—by utter disregard of conventionality, of mere pleasurable sound, free use of elaborated discords and unfinished cadences, the story is literally told in music, as well as by gesture, and voice, and *mise-en-scène*.

Disciples tell us that the whole work is in *crescendo*, the *Götterdämmerung* being the highest development of the art; we should say that for beauty as ordinarily understood, it is seldom equal to the *Walkyrie* or *Siegfried*, but it is certainly

the most astonishing, varied, and dramatic of all.

Take two instances. When Siegfried comes to the palace of the Gibichungen, the lineal descendants of the perished Nibelungen, he is given a fatal potion, as we have already mentioned, whereby he forgets all his former experiences of his love for Brünnhilde, becomes as one of his foes, and passionately attached to Gutrune, the sister of his hereditary foe. At once his former phrases are perverted into extreme keys, he catches up and imitates the discordant Haagen-motif, the very Hero-motif is flattened and discordant. Again, he is by and by given a certain potion, and compelled to reveal his old life, thereby to prove his falseness and justify his impending murder. In a single song he relates the incidents of his birth and infancy, his exploits, and finally his passing through the fire and his winning of Brünnhilde—herein all the motifs connected with the development in the former and present play of his experiences are recapitulated, *ten* in all—and when the exquisite climax is reached, the accompaniment passes through a beautiful modulation into a singularly fresh development of the finale of *Siegfried*.

Critics, who were not present at Bayreuth, and by no possibility can have gained acquaintance from the printed scores with its possibilities in performance, have scoffed at the comparison of certain passages, or rather movements, in the orchestra, with the symphonies of Beethoven. Beethoven is Wagner's cherished and acknowledged master; for many years he studied two authors mainly, Shakspeare for poetry, Beethoven for music. Thus, many periods of the accompaniment are thrown into true symphonic form, of which the subjects are the motifs which describe the action; of the opening in Siegfried of which the Forge-motif is the subject, of the *adagio* which connects together the first and second acts of the *Götterdämmerung*, of the *andante* with which the *Walküre* concludes, not even Beethoven himself would have been otherwise than proud. If nothing else in it is admirable, the work of the orchestra must

be recognized as such. But to say that any one can appreciate its variety, almost endless, in a single hearing is monstrous. Here is the damning fact, that neither can orchestra be found to play, nor singers to declaim, nor audience to listen to the work as a whole again. Herein is chronicled the euthanasia of the *magnum opus* of the advanced school: for it is evident not even the riches of the score will induce the ordinary conductors or executants to rehearse frequently or perform unflaggingly; that no love of art or disdain of lucre will persuade singers to strain and sacrifice their voices to the caprice of a theorist; and that finally, no intellectual excitement, however supreme, will compel average audiences to study (as it must be studied) the minute development of tone and character painting which makes Wagner the George Eliot of Music. That it will modify in a measure all future opera which is to live, I believe. Composers must in future recognize some dramatic element in dramatic music. But that it will live itself, in any form of life worth calling life, I do not believe. A curiosity to be revived once in a generation by an artist nation, a wonder to be studied darkly by musicians, but little else. The *Walkyrie*, if I am not much mistaken, will be heard in a year or two in every leading German city; it will stand by itself; in six or seven years, perhaps (for even musical events crowd on us in these days) it will penetrate to London. We shall enjoy in due course the routine of the "event" of the Italian season; the manager will rely on the scenes of the *Walküren-Ritt* and the *Fire-rock* to carry through his venture; the artistes will convert Wagnerian declamation (*to be sung in strict time*) into Italian recitative "*largo alla voce*;" the Battle of the Critics will be fought in the morning journals; but, at least, the *morceaux* will escape that lowest form of art life which in the metempsychosis of musical vitalities is reserved for the airs of the Italian Maestri—the Barrel Organ.

C. HALFORD HAWKINS.

ROMANTICISM.

THE words *classical* and *romantic*, although, like many other critical expressions, they have sometimes been abused by those who have understood them too vaguely or too absolutely, yet define two real tendencies in the history of art and literature. Used in an exaggerated sense to express a greater opposition between those tendencies than really exists, they have sometimes divided people of taste into opposite camps. But in that *House Beautiful*, which the creative minds of all generations—the artists and those who have treated life in the spirit of art—are always building together for the refreshment of the human spirit, these oppositions cease, and the *Interpreter* of the *House Beautiful*, the true æsthetic critic, uses these divisions only so far as they enable him to enter into the peculiarities of the objects with which he deals. The term *classical*, fixed, as it is, to a well-defined literature, and a well-defined group in art, is clear indeed; but then it has often been used in a hard and merely scholastic sense, by the praisers of what is old and accustomèd, at the expense of what is new—critics who would never have discovered for themselves the charm of any work, whether new or old; who value what is old in art or literature for its accessories, chiefly for the conventional authority that has gathered about it; people who would never really have been made glad by any Venus fresh risen from the sea, and who praise the Venus of old Greece and Rome, only because they fancy her grown now into something staid and tame.

And as the term *classical* has been used in a too absolute, and therefore in a misleading sense, so the term *romantic* has been used much too vaguely, in various accidental senses. The sense in which Scott is called a romantic writer is chiefly that, in opposition to the

literary tradition of the last century, he loved strange adventure, and sought it in the middle age. Much later, in a Yorkshire village, the spirit of romanticism bore a more genuine fruit in the work of a young girl, Emily Brontë—the romance of *Wuthering Heights*; the figures of Hareton Earnshaw, of Catherine Linton and of Heathcliff, with his tears falling into the fire, tearing up Catherine's grave and removing one side of her coffin, that he may really lie beside her in death,—figures so passionate, woven on a background of delicately beautiful moorland scenery,—being typical examples of that spirit. In Germany, again, that spirit is shown less in Tieck, its professional representative, than in Meinhold, the author of *Sidonia the Sorceress* and the *Amber Witch*. In Germany and France, within the last hundred years, the term has been used to describe a particular school of writers; and, consequently, when Heine criticises the *Romantic School* in Germany, that movement which culminated in Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen*, or when Théophile Gautier criticises the romantic movement in France, where indeed it bore its most characteristic fruits, and its play is hardly yet over (where in a certain *bizarrie* of motive, united with faultless literary execution, it still shows itself in the writings of Feuillet and Flaubert), they use the word with an exact sense of special artistic qualities; but they use it, nevertheless, with a limited application to the manifestation of those qualities at a particular period. But the romantic spirit is in reality an ever-present, an enduring principle in the artistic temperament, and the qualities of thought and style which that and other similar uses of the word *romantic* really indicate, are indeed but symptoms of a very continuous and widely-working influence.

Though the words *classical* and

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romantic, then, have acquired an almost technical meaning in application to certain developments of German and French taste, yet this is but one variation of an old opposition which may be traced from the very beginning of the formation of European art and literature. From the first formation of anything like a standard of taste in these things, the restless curiosity of their more eager lovers necessarily made itself felt, in the craving for new motives, new subjects of interest, new modifications of style. Hence, the opposition between the classicists and the romanticists, between the adherents, in the culture of beauty, of liberty, and authority respectively, of strength and order or what the Greeks called *κοσμίτης*.

Sainte-Beuve, in the third volume of the *Causeries de Lundi*, has discussed the question, *What is meant by a classic?* It was a question he was well fitted to answer, having himself lived through many phases of taste, and having been in earlier life an enthusiastic member of the romantic school; he was also a great master of that sort of philosophy of literature which delights in tracing traditions in it, and the way in which various phases of thought and sentiment maintain themselves, through successive modifications, from epoch to epoch. His aim, then, is to give the word *classic* a wider and, as he says, a more generous sense than it commonly bears; to make it expressly *grandiose et flottant*; and in doing this, he develops, in a masterly manner, those qualities of measure, purity, temperance, of which it is the especial function of classical art and literature, whatever meaning, narrower or wider, we understand by the term, to take care.

The charm, then, of what is classical in art or literature is that of the well-known tale, to which we can nevertheless listen over and over again, because it is told so well. To the absolute beauty of its form is added the accidental, tranquil charm of familiarity. There are times, indeed, at which these charms fail to work on our spirits at all, because they fail to excite us. "Ro-

manticism," says Stendhal, "is the art of presenting to people the literary works which, in the actual state of their habits and beliefs, are capable of giving them the greatest possible pleasure; classicism, on the contrary, that which gave the greatest possible pleasure to their great-grandfathers." But then, beneath all changes of habits and beliefs, our love of that mere abstract proportion, of music, which what is classical in literature possesses, still maintains itself in the best of us, and what pleased our grandparents may at least tranquillise us. What is classical comes to us out of the cool and quiet of other times, as a measure of what a long experience has shown us will at least never displease us. And in the classical literature of Greece and Rome, as in the classics of the last century, the essentially classical element is that quality of order in beauty, which they possess, indeed, in a pre-eminent degree, and which impresses some minds to the exclusion of everything else in them.

It is the addition of strangeness to beauty that constitutes the romantic character in art; and the desire of beauty being a fixed element in every artistic organization, it is the addition of curiosity to this desire of beauty that constitutes the romantic temper. Curiosity and the desire of beauty have each their place in art, as in all true criticism. When one's curiosity is deficient, when one is not eager enough for new impressions, new pleasures, one is liable to value mere academical proprieties too highly, to be satisfied with worn-out or conventional types, with the insipid ornament of Racine, or the prettiness of that later Greek sculpture, which passed so long for true Hellenic work; to miss those places where the handiwork of nature, or the artist, has been most cunning; to find the most stimulating products of art a mere irritation. And when one's curiosity is in excess, when it overbalances the desire of beauty, then one is liable to value in works of art what is inartistic in them, to be satisfied with what is

exaggerated in art, with productions like some of those of the romantic school in Germany, not to distinguish jealously enough between what is admirably done, and what is done not quite so well, in the writings, for instance, of Jean Paul or Whitman. And if I had to give instances of these defects, then I should say that Pope, in common with the age of literature to which he belonged, had too little curiosity, so that there is always a certain insipidity in the effect of his work, exquisite as it is; and, coming down to our own time, that Balzac had an excess of curiosity, curiosity not duly tempered with the desire of beauty.

But, however falsely the two tendencies may be opposed by critics, or exaggerated by artists themselves, they are tendencies really at work at all times in art—moulding it, with the balance sometimes a little on one side, sometimes a little on the other, generating respectively, as the balance inclines on this side or that, two principles, two traditions, the classical and romantic traditions in art, and in literature so far as it partakes of the spirit of art. If there is a great overbalance of curiosity, then we have the grotesque in art; if the union of strangeness and beauty, under very difficult and complex conditions, be a successful one, if the union be entire, then the resultant beauty is very exquisite, very attractive. With a passionate care for beauty, the romantic spirit refuses to have it, unless the condition of strangeness be first satisfied. Its desire is towards a beauty born of unlikely elements, by a profound alchemy, by a difficult initiation, by the charm which wrings it even out of terrible things; and a trace of distortion, of the grotesque, may perhaps linger, as an additional element of expression, about its ultimate grace. Its flowers are ripened not by quiet, everyday sunshine, but by the lightning, which, tearing open the hill-side, brought the seeds hidden there to a sudden, mysterious blossoming. Its eager, excited spirit will have strength, the grotesque, first of all,—the

trees shrieking as you tear off the leaves; for Valjean, the long years of convict life; for Redgauntlet, the quicksands of Solway Moss; then, incorporate with this strangeness, superinduced upon it, intensified by restraint, as much sweetness, as much beauty, as is compatible with that. *Energique, frais, et dispos*—these, according to Sainte-Beuve, are the characteristics of a genuine classic—*les ouvrages anciens ne sont pas classiques parce qu'ils sont vieux, mais parce qu'ils sont énergiques, frais, et dispos*. Energy, freshness, intelligent, masterly disposition—these are characteristics of Victor Hugo when his alchemy is complete, in certain figures, like Marius and Cosette, in certain scenes, like that in the opening of *Les Travailleurs de la Mer*, when Déruchette writes the name of Gilliatt in the snow on Christmas morning; but always there is the little salt of strangeness discernible there as well.

The essential elements, then, of the romantic spirit are curiosity and the love of beauty; and it is, as the accidental effect of these qualities only, that it seeks the middle age; because, in the overcharged atmosphere of the middle age there are unworked sources of romantic effect, of a strange beauty, to be won, by strong imagination, out of things unlikely or remote.

Probably few now read Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne*, though it has its interest, the interest which never quite fades out of work really touched with the enthusiasm of the spiritual adventurer, the pioneer in culture. It was published in 1810, to introduce to French readers a new school of writers, the romantic school, from beyond the Rhine; and it was followed twenty-three years later by Heine's *Romantische Schule*, as at once a supplement and a correction. Both these books, then, connect romanticism with Germany, with the names especially of Goethe and Tieck; and to many English readers the idea of romanticism is still inseparably connected with Germany—that Germany which, in its quaint old towns, under the spire of Strasburg or the towers of Heidelberg, was always listening in

rapt inaction to the melodious, fascinating voices of the middle age, and which, now that it has got its Strasburg back again, has, I suppose, almost disappeared. But neither Germany, with its Goethe and Tieck, nor England, with its Byron and Scott, is nearly so representative of the romantic temper as France, with Mürger, and Gautier, and Victor Hugo. It is in French literature that its most characteristic expression is to be found; and that, as most closely derivative, historically, from such peculiar conditions as ever reinforce it to the utmost.

For, although temperament has much to do with the generation of the romantic spirit, and although this spirit, with its curiosity, its thirst for a curious beauty, may be always traceable in excellent art, traceable even in Sophocles, yet still, in a limited sense, it may be said to be a product of special epochs. Outbreaks of this spirit, that is, come naturally with particular periods; times when, in men's desires towards art and poetry, curiosity may be noticed to take the lead; when men come to art and poetry, with a deep thirst for intellectual excitement, after a long *ennui*, or in reaction against the strain of outward practical things; in the later middle age, for instance; so that medieval poetry, centering in Dante, is often opposed to Greek and Roman poetry, as romantic to classical poetry. What the romanticism of Dante is, you may measure if you compare the lines in which Virgil describes the hazel-wood, from whose broken twigs flows the blood of Polydorus, not without the expression of a real shudder at the ghastly incident, with the whole canto of the *Inferno* into which Dante has expanded them, beautifying and softening it meanwhile by a sentiment of profound pity. And it is especially in that period of intellectual disturbance, the breaking up of a long winter, amid which the romance languages define themselves at last, that this temper shows itself. Here, in the poetry of Provence, the very name of romanticism is stamped with its true signification; here we have indeed a romantic world,

grotesque even, in the strength of its passions, almost insane in its curious expression of them, drawing all things into its sphere, making birds and lifeless things its voices and messengers; yet so penetrated with the desire for beauty and sweetness, that it begets a wholly new species of poetry, in which the *Renaissance* may be said to begin. The last century was pre-eminently a classical age, an age in which, in art and literature, the element of a comely order was in the ascendant; which, passing away, left a hard battle to be fought between the classical and the romantic schools. Yet it is in the heart of this century, with Goldsmith and Stothard, with Watteau and the *Siècle de Louis XIV.* in one of its central, if not most characteristic figures, in Rousseau, that modern romanticism, French romanticism, really originates. And what in the eighteenth century is but an exceptional phenomenon, breaking through its fair reserve and discretion only at rare intervals, is the habitual guise of the nineteenth, breaking through it perpetually, with a feverishness, an incomprehensible straining and excitement, which all experience to some degree, but yearning also, in the genuine children of the romantic school, to be *énergique, frais, et dispos*, for those qualities of energy, freshness, comely order; and often, in Mürger, in Gautier, in Charles Baudelaire, for instance, with singular felicity attaining them.

Into the character of Rousseau Mr. John Morley has entered, with a perfect dramatic justice, analysing, and combining into an entirely conceivable whole, the wildness which has shocked so many, and the fascination which has influenced almost every one, in that squalid, eloquent figure, which we see so clearly in Mr. Morley's book, wandering under the apple-blossoms and among the vines of Neufchatel or Vevay, itself like a very successful romantic invention. His passionateness, his lacerated heart, his deep subjectivity, his *bizarrierie*, his distorted strangeness—he makes all men in love with these. *Je ne suis fait comme aucun de ceux que j'ai vus—si je ne vaudrais pas mieux, au moins je suis*

autre.—These words, from the first page of the *Confessions*, anticipate all the Werthers, Rénés, Obermanns, of the last hundred years. For Rousseau did but foretaste a trouble in the whole spirit of the wide world; and thirty years afterwards, what in him was a profound subjectivity, became part of the general consciousness. It is in Rousseau's terrible tragedy that French romanticism, with much else, begins; and in the wonderful chapter on *The Hermitage* in Mr. Morley's first volume, we seem actually to assist at the birth of this new, strong spirit in the French mind. A storm was coming; Rousseau, with others, felt it, and helped to bring it down; and, as a fact in literary history, he introduces a disturbing element into French literature, then so trim and formal, like our own literature of the age of Queen Anne.

In 1815, the storm had come and gone; but had left, in the spirit of young France, the *ennui* of an immense disillusion. In the last chapter of Edgar Quinet's *Révolution Française*, a work itself full of irony, of disillusion, he distinguishes two books, Senancour's *Obermann* and Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme*, as characteristic of the first decade of the present country. In those two books we detect already the disease and the cure; in *Obermann* the irony, refined into a plaintive philosophy of indifference, which is the basis of both alike; in Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme*, the refuge from a tarnished actual present, into a world of strength and beauty in the middle age, as at an earlier period, in *Réné* and *Atala*, into the free play of them in savage life. It is to minds in this spiritual situation, weary of the present, but yearning for the spectacle of beauty and strength, that the works of French romanticism appeal. They set a positive value on the intense, the exceptional; and a certain distortion is sometimes noticeable in them, as in conceptions like Victor Hugo's *Quasimodo*, or *Gwynplaine*—something of a terrible grotesque, of the *macabre*, as the French themselves say—though always com-

bined with perfect literary execution, as in Gautier's *Morte Amoureuse*, or the scene of the "maimed" burial-rites of the player, dead of the frost, in his *Capitaine Fracasse*,—true flowers of the yew. It becomes grim humour in Victor Hugo's combat of Gilliatt with the devil-fish, or the incident, with all its ghastly comedy drawn out at length, of the great gun detached from its fastenings on shipboard, in *Quatre-Vingt-Treize*,—*le plus redoutable peut-être des événements de mer*, and in the entire episode there of the *Convention*. Not less surely does it reach a genuine pathos; for subjectivity, the habit of noting and distinguishing one's own most intimate passages of feeling, makes one sympathetic, as begetting a keen habit of entering, by all sorts of finer ways, into the intimate recesses of other minds. So that pity is a note of romanticism; both Gautier and Baudelaire being great lovers of animals, and charming writers about them; and Mürger being unrivalled in the pathos of his *Scènes de la vie de Jeunesse*, penetrating delicately into all situations which appeal to pity; above all, into the special or exceptional phase of feeling, because the romantic humour is not afraid of the quaintness or singularity of its circumstances or expression, pity, indeed, being the essence of humour; so that Victor Hugo, who knows the whole pathetic philosophy of children's toys, on which Baudelaire also has written so excellently, turns romanticism back into practice, in his hunger and thirst after *Justice*!—a justice which shall no longer wrong, by ignoring them in a stupid, mere breadth of view, facts about animals and children. Yet they are antinomian, too, sometimes. For the love of energy and beauty, of distinction in passion, tended naturally to become a little *bizarre*; plunging into the middle age, into the secrets of old Italian story. *Are you in the Inferno?*—you wonder at something malign in so much beauty. For over all is manifest that care for the refreshment of the spirit in art, that dominant love of beauty, so that, in

their search for subtle secrets of expression, they went back to that forgotten world of early French poetry, and literature became a delicate art; like goldsmith's work, says Sainte-Beuve, of Bertrand's *Gaspard de la Nuit*; an imagery all compact of vivid sensation in Gautier, *γλαφυρά καὶ ἀνθηρὰ σύνθεσις*: and that peculiarly French art, the art *argute loqui*, attains in them a proportion which it had never seen before.

Stendhal, a writer whom I have already quoted, and of whom English readers might well know much more than they do, stands between the earlier and later growths of the romantic spirit. His novels are full of romantic qualities; and his other writings, partly critical, partly personal reminiscences, are a very curious and interesting illustration of the needs out of which romanticism arose. In his book on *Racine and Shakspere*, Stendhal argues that all good art was romantic in its day; and this is perhaps true in Stendhal's sense. This book, a book full of "dry light" and fertile ideas, was published in the year 1823; and the object of the little treatise is to defend the liberty and independence of choice, and treatment of subject, in art and literature, against those who upheld the exclusive authority of precedent. In pleading the cause of romanticism, therefore, it is the novelty, both of form and of motive, in writings like the *Hernani* of Victor Hugo, which soon followed it, raising a storm of criticism, that he is chiefly concerned to justify. To be interesting, to make us feel hot and cold, to keep us from yawning even, art and literature must follow the subtle movements of that nimbly-moving *Time-Spirit*, or *Zeit-Geist*, understood of French not less than of German criticism, which is always modifying men's taste, as it modifies their manners and their pleasures. This, he contends, is what all great workmen had always understood. Dante, Shakspere, Molière, had exercised an absolute independence in their choice of subject and treatment. To turn always with that subtly-changeable essence, yet to retain the flavour of

what was admirably done in past generations, in the classics, as we say, is the problem of true romanticism. "Dante," he says, "was pre-eminently the romantic poet. He adored Virgil, yet he wrote the *Divine Comedy*, with the episode of Ugolino, which is as unlike the *Aeneid* as can possibly be. And those who thus obey the fundamental principle of romanticism, one by one become classical, and are joined to that ever-increasing general league, formed by men of all countries, to approach nearer and nearer to perfection."

Romanticism, then, although it has its epochs, is in its essential characteristics rather a spirit which shows itself at all times, in various degrees, in individuals and their works, and the amount of which criticism has to estimate in them taken one by one, than the peculiarity of a time or a school. Depending on the balance of curiosity and the desire of beauty, natural tendencies of the artistic spirit at all times, it must always be partly a question of individual temperament. The eighteenth century in England has been regarded as almost exclusively a classical reign; yet William Blake, a type of so much which breaks through what are conventionally thought the influences of that century, is still a noticeable phenomenon in it; and the reaction in favour of naturalism in poetry begins in it early. There are, thus, the born romanticists and the born classicists. There are the born classicists who start with form, to whose minds the comeliness of the old, immemorial, well-recognised types in art and literature, have revealed themselves impressively; who will entertain no matter which will not go easily and flexibly into them; whose work aspires only to be a variation upon, or study from, the older masters. "Tis art's decline, my son!" they are always saying, to the progressive element in their own generation; to those who care for that which in fifty years' time everyone will be caring for. On the other hand, there are the born romanticists, who start with an original, untried matter, still in fusion; who conceive this vividly, and hold by it as the essence of their

work ; who, by the very vividness and heat of their conception, purge away from it, sooner or later, all that is not organically appropriate to it, till the whole effect adjusts itself in clear, orderly, proportionate form ; which form, after a very little time, becomes classical in its turn.

The romantic or classical character of a picture, a poem, a literary work, depends, as I said, on the balance of certain qualities in it ; and in this sense, a very real distinction may be drawn between good classical and good romantic work. But all critical terms are relative ; and there is at least a valuable suggestion in that theory of Stendhal's, that all good art was romantic in its day. In the beauties of Homer and Pheidias, quiet as they now seem, there must have been, for those who confronted them for the first time, excitement and surprise, the sudden, unforeseen satisfaction of the desire for beauty. Yet the *Odyssey*, with its marvellous adventure, is more romantic than the *Iliad*, which yet contains, among many other romantic episodes, that of the immortal horses of Achilles, who weep at the death of Patroclus. Æschylus is more romantic than Sophocles, whose *Philoctetes*, if written now, would figure, for the strangeness of its motive and the perfectness of its execution, as centrally romantic ; while, of Euripides, it may be said, that his method in writing his plays is to sacrifice readily almost everything else, so that he may attain the fulness of a single romantic effect. These two tendencies, indeed, might be applied as a measure or standard, all through Greek and Roman art and poetry, with very illuminating results ; and for an analyst of the romantic principle in art, no exercise would be more profitable, than to walk through the collection of classical antiquities at the Louvre, or the British Museum, or to turn over some representative collection of Greek coins,

and note how the element of curiosity of the love of strangeness, insinuates itself into classical design, and record the effects of the romantic spirit in them, the traces of struggle, of the grotesque perhaps ; overbalanced here by sweetness ; as in the sculpture of Chartres and Rheims, the real sweetness of mind in the sculptor is often overbalanced by the grotesque, by the rudeness of his strength.

Classicism, then, means for Stendhal, for that younger enthusiastic band of French writers whose unconscious method he formulated into principles, the reign of what is pedantic, conventional, narrowly academical in art ; for him all good art is romantic. To Sainte-Beuve, who understands the term in a more liberal sense, it is the characteristic of certain epochs, of certain spirits in every epoch, not given to the exercise of original imagination, but rather to the working out of refinements of manner on some authorised matter ; and who bring to their perfection, in this way, the elements of sanity, of order and beauty, in manner. In general criticism, again, it means the spirit of Greece and Rome, of some phases in literature and art that may seem of equal authority with Greece and Rome, the age of Louis the Fourteenth, the age of Johnson ; though this is at best an uncritical use of the term, because in Greek and Roman work there are typical examples of the romantic spirit. But explain the terms as we will, in application to particular epochs, there are these two elements always recognisable ; united in perfect art, in Sophocles, in Dante, in the highest work of Goethe, though not always absolutely balanced there ; and these two elements may be not inappropriately termed the classical and romantic tendencies.

WALTER H. PATER.

THE SILENT POOL.

BENEATH the surface of the crystal water
 Metallic shines a floor of frosted green;
 Uneven, like a depth of emerald lichen,
 Thro' ranks of dark weeds gleams its fairy sheen.

Horsetails of varied growth and plumage sombre,
 Like ancient warriors in dark armour dight;
 Like fair young maidens' arms the prism-hued grass-leaves,
 Clinging in fond embrace before the fight.

Round and about this Silent Pool the ash-trees
 Bend down in thirsty eagerness to drink;
 Amid their gray-green leaves show, keenly vivid,
 Long feathering laurel-sprays that clothe the brink.

High up in air, some thirty feet or over,
 A wild white rose above the footpath clings;
 Fearless she clasps a tough, unyielding ash-trunk,
 And o'er the Pool gay wreaths of blossom flings.

Idly I drop a pebble in the water,
 Each sombre horsetail nods a plumed head;
 Like pearl or opal gem, the stone sinks slowly,
 Transmuted ere it reach its emerald bed.

Mystic the emerald hue beneath the water,
 Weird-like this tint by which the scene is haunted;
 Vainly I ask my senses if they wake,
 Or is the deep and silent Pool enchanted?

Now as the widening ripple circles shoreward,
 The plumed dusky warriors file away;
 The slender grass-blades wave bright arms imploring,
 Streaking with tender green the grim array.

Leafless, a gaunt-armed giant oak, storm-scathed,
 In gnarled bareness overhangs the Pool;
 Fantastic show its knotted limbs contorted,
 Grotesque and gray among the leafage cool.

Caught here and there amid the feathered foliage
 Are glimpses of the far hills' softened blue,
 While overhead the clouds, snow-white and fleecy,
 Float slowly on a yet intenser hue.

From Norman times 'tis said, maybe from Saxon,
 This calm tree-circled lake secluded lay,
 Pure as an infant's breast, its crystal mirror
 Baring its inmost depths to gaze of day.

Some specks there are, some clay-flakes on its surface,
 To open view revealed, like childish sin;
 No roots have they, nor downward growth, to canker
 The purity that dwells the Pool within.

Mystic the em'rald hue beneath the water,
 Fairy the tint by which the scene is haunted;
 Vainly I ask my senses if they wake,
 Or is the clear and silent Pool enchanted?

The swallow flits two-bodied o'er the water,
 Its four wings like a windmill's sails outspread;
 Through the dark horsetails shoot the silver grayling,
 To seize the May-fly skimming overhead.

Flying from lawless love—so runs the story—
 A maiden plunged beneath this silent wave;
 There, where a holly sits the bank so closely,
 She sprang and sank—beyond all power to save.

Six hundred years and more since that dark legend,
 Legend that stained a king with lasting shame—
 And still the deep and silent Pool lies crystal,
 Crystal and clear as that poor maiden's fame.

Yet mystic is the hue beneath the water;
 Unreal the tint by which the scene is haunted;—
 Again I ask my senses if they wake,
 Or if the Silent Pool's indeed enchanted?

K. S. M.

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THE RESULTS OF FIVE YEARS OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION.

In this paper I do not propose to discuss the question whether the quality of elementary education in this country has improved or deteriorated in consequence of the introduction of compulsion. Few inquiries would be more difficult. There is no absolute standard of quality, and the question whether an increased amount of teaching in extra subjects has compensated for the falling off, if there is any falling off, in the acquirements ascertained by the pass examinations, would be answered differently by different people. I use the word results for two things which can be measured in figures.

(1.) The change in the number of children attending efficient elementary schools.

(2.) The change, if any, in the regularity of attendance at school.

In the English Education Act of 1870, the Government, for the first time, sanctioned the principle that wherever the school board of a locality believes that children ought to be compelled to attend school, parents *may* be compelled to send them under penalty of fine or imprisonment, subject to such bye-laws as the school board may enact.

Since that time, school boards representing a population of nearly 12½ millions of people in England and Wales have passed and worked compulsory bye-laws. Compulsion is now adopted by forty-six per cent of the whole population of England and Wales, and by eighty-two per cent of the borough population.

In the new Education Act of 1876, England has adopted the principle of universal compulsion, creating a school attendance committee where there is no school board, and enjoining that committee or the school board of the locality to make and enforce bye-laws and otherwise carry out the provisions of the Act.

They are briefly these:—

1st. It is declared to be the duty of every parent to see to the elementary education of his child above five and below fourteen.

2nd. No employer is permitted to employ

(a) any child under ten years of age with certain—no doubt considerable—permitted exceptions; or,

(b) any child over ten and up to fourteen

without a certificate either of education or of previous attendance of a due amount.

The employer is liable in penalties not exceeding 40s. The parent is liable for his child, and he may be fined or his child may be taken from him and sent either to a certified industrial school, or to a new kind of certified day industrial school, which gives meals, but not lodging. The school board and the school attendance committee are to have power to make bye-laws regulating the attendance of children. For the present the standard of education required after ten, will be Standard IV., and of school attendance, 250 attendances (out of 450 possible) in each of five years *after* five years of age. These provisions will come into force fully in 1881.

In Scotland, the Act of 1872 for the first time adopted the principle of universal statutory compulsion, and the school boards which are established in every parish in the country have since been charged to see that all children between five and thirteen attend school with reasonable regularity. Offenders are liable to prosecution by the school board before the Sheriff. But there is no definition of regularity of attendance in the Act; there is no power given to school boards to make binding bye-laws in the matter; and the Sheriff is the sole judge whether a school board prosecuting for irregularity

is setting up a reasonable or an unreasonable standard.

In Ireland there is no compulsory law.

In the belief that a statement of the actual results of the compulsory measures which have been tested by experience might be generally interesting, and in the hope that it might point to some important practical inferences, I have collated the statistics of the different countries and of several great cities. I owe my information to the official returns, and especially to the great courtesy of the school board officers for London, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, and Glasgow.

Ireland, as I have said, is under no compulsory law. Its educational progress may, therefore, be advantageously compared with that of Scotland and England, and especially with that of the four great English communities, in which compulsion has been more or less gradually introduced since 1871, and of Glasgow, where it has been introduced since 1873. The returns are those of the National Board, whose schools, certainly, supply most of the educational wants of that country, though since the inquiry of the Primary Education Committee held in 1868, there is no means of indicating the precise proportion of the work done there by outside organizations.

The *advance* of education in Ireland may be measured by the following figures:—

CHILDREN ON ROLLS.

1870	951,000
1875	1,012,900

an addition in five years of 61,000, or 6 per cent. This provision of school education in Ireland may at first sight seem sufficient; the population being somewhere about five-and-a-half millions, and *one in six* in school attendance, being admittedly a very high figure, not reached by either England or Scotland. But the National Board counts children on the roll in a way altogether peculiar. The details of that difference are explained in the Irish report for 1875. In

that year it has for the first time given us the means of comparing attendance with population according to the scale with which we are familiar. It appears that, instead of 1,012,000 children on the rolls, 578,000 would have been so reckoned on the English method—say between one in nine and one in ten of the population on the roll. There is thus a great mass of uneducated children to draw upon, and we may say without any hesitation that the slow increase of about 1 per cent per annum on the average of the last five years is *not* due to the supply of uneducated children in Ireland having been at all exhausted. The average daily attendance is 390,000, which is 67 per cent of the roll attendance computed according to the English mode, and about one in fourteen of the population. The Irish mode of reckoning one attendance per day, however, is less strict than the English mode of two attendances; and I have no doubt that if the Irish were to adopt the English method, the Irish proportion of average to roll attendance would be lower than 67 per cent.

The three simple standards by which I shall measure educational status will be these:—

1. What is the average attendance, and what proportion does it bear to the population?
2. At what rate has it been recently increasing?
3. What proportion of the children on roll are in average attendance?

The third question tests the regularity of the children. It is the only test available. No doubt the rolls are kept in a rather loose way in many localities, and it would be infinitely better if some statistical datum subject to no dubiety, *e.g.* the number of children who have actually attended school during a certain time fixed uniformly for the whole country, were substituted for the roll attendance, by the central authorities. In the meantime we have no choice, and although the test is a rough one, it is probably fairly sufficient.

In Scotland the change to the new system was made in 1872. During the

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last year of the old system, the annual grant schools showed an average attendance of 214,000, being one in sixteen of the population. In the first year the change had scarcely begun to work—the average rising only to 221,000. In the second year, however, it rose to 264,000, and in the present year to 304,000. In three years, therefore, under the quickening impulse of a universal compulsory law, the average school attendance of Scotland has increased by 90,000 children, being 42 per cent; while in five years the average attendance in Ireland has increased from 359,000, by 31,000 pupils, being $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The average attendance in National Schools in Ireland in 1870 bore much the same proportion to the whole population as in Privy Council schools in Scotland in 1872. In 1875 the average attendance in Ireland was one in fourteen of the population, while in Scotland it was one in eleven.

These figures are no doubt somewhat too favourable to the principle of compulsion. The Scotch Act added to the annual grant schools a number of old parish schools which formerly did a considerable portion of the work of the country, but which had not been included in the Privy Council returns. I have no data by which I can accurately measure the amount of this mere statistical addition to the Privy Council figures. But in the list of schools actually added and to be added, we find that the number of new schools for which building grants have been obtained since 1872 is 1383, being half as many as the whole previous supply. The fact indicates a rise in attendance much the same as that which I have given above.

The average attendance over all Scotland bears now the proportion to the roll of 75 per cent, which compares very favourably with the Irish average of 67 per cent, and the more favourably as a great number of the new scholars in Scotland belong to the classes whose children are most disposed to attend irregularly.

The effect of the changes which have taken place in *England* since 1870 is not

masked by any statistical accident like the addition of the old parochial schools *en masse* to the annual grant list. In the year before the English Educational Act, with its permissive compulsion, began to operate, the average attendance of day scholars was 1,152,389, being one in *nineteen* of the population, whereas it is now 1,837,180, or one in *thirteen* of the population. It has risen 685,000, or 60 per cent in the *five* years, while that in *Ireland* has only risen $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, and that in *Scotland* has risen 42 per cent in *three* years. It may be comforting to ratepayers to learn that the schools already provided can hold a considerable number of additional children. Each department in *England* with accommodation for 163 scholars had an average attendance last year of 95. The accommodation provided in *England* is in excess of that used by as much as 70 per cent. In *Scotland*, as might have been expected, there has been no such extravagance in public money in anticipation of public needs. The Scotch schools have accommodation for 133 per department, to meet an average attendance of 103—an excess of 30 per cent. The 70 per cent of *England* is no doubt partly due to the passionate efforts made by managers during the English year of grace in 1871.

The average attendance in *England*, 67 per cent of the roll, is identical with that of *Ireland*—a result which is somewhat surprising, considering that 60 per cent of new and untrained, and consequently irregular, scholars, have been added to the school lists during the last five years.

These are the general results for the three countries. But in *England*, compulsion is only partial, and although it is universal in *Scotland*, it is only at the beginning of its work.

We shall, accordingly, look somewhat more in detail to the results of the application of compulsion in the large cities, which are types of 82 per cent of the borough population of *England*. The Act of 1870 decreed a school board for *London*. The first step which the

board took was to discover the actual school supply in the metropolis, and to make a reasonable estimate of what was wanted. The Government theory was, that accommodation ought to be provided for one in six of the population. After making allowances for the middle and upper classes, and for the necessary absences, the School Board of London decided that a supply for one in eight of the population was enough to provide for *elementary* schooling in its district. Accordingly it was necessary to have accommodation for 420,000 children, the population in 1871 being approximately 3,356,000. The Board found schools existing in 1870, or erected or projected, between that and 1873, for 308,000, so that their first duty was to build for 112,000 more children. Many of the existing schools were inefficient—they had to work gradually towards the remodelling or uprooting of these inefficient schools—they had to alter the habit of irregular attendance. Between the spring of 1871 and the Michaelmas of 1873, two and a half years, they had increased the average attendance by 60,000. At Midsummer, 1876, the average attendance had risen to 305,749, an increase of 131,448 over the spring of 1871, when it was 174,301. Thus in five years the average attendance on efficient schools has risen by 75 per cent in the metropolis, against the Irish 8 per cent in five years. Besides this there were 42,000 in non-efficient schools, which is 12,000 fewer than in the previous year. There were 87,000 who ought to have been at school, but who were absent from various causes at Midsummer 1876. This official estimate of deficiency is founded on the theory that 575,000 children between three and thirteen require elementary teaching—say 1 in 6 of the population. But the School Board of London do not think it necessary to provide school accommodation for more than 440,000—say 1 in 8, and in fact they have provided, up to the end of 1876, for 420,000, which was their original estimate of existing deficiency. They have only to provide

for the children representing the increase of population since 1871 in efficient schools.

The change wrought since the foundation of the School Board system is thus enormous. Considering the number of untrained children drawn for the first time within the School Board net, the regularity of attendance secured is also very remarkable. It was 75 per cent of the roll in Midsummer, 74½ per cent at Christmas, 1875, 76½ per cent at Midsummer, 1876—rather better than that in Scotland—and these results are to be compared with the 67 per cent of Ireland, where there is no compulsion, and of all England, where it is only partial.

Of the 87,000 not attending school in the metropolis, I must add that 65,000 are under five, an age when we in Scotland scarcely think of sending children to school at all. The infant school system is, it is well known, much more developed in South than in North Britain.

For the sake of simplicity, I have neglected the varying increases of population in the large towns. To take it into account would introduce no material change in the comparative figures, and very little change of any kind.

It remains for us to look at the *dark side* of compulsion. In London two preliminary notices precede the parent's summons before a magistrate for neglect of his children. These warnings generally have the effect desired. Thus there were 35,000 A notices in last half year, which brought 13,000 to school or made them more regular; then there were 23,000 B notices; these were followed by 3,990 summonses, and by about 3,400 fines. At that time in London, 150 people were summoned, and 130 people were fined every week for neglecting the education of their children. The cost of this machinery for the year is 24,000*l.*, being 1*s.* 7*d.* per head per annum on the *average* attendance secured. But the cost, heavy though it is, seems to me scarcely worth counting compared with the feeling amongst the

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poor which I should expect these prosecutions to create. There is no sign, however, that the efficiency of the present compulsory action is diminishing. The addition to the attendance in the half year ending Midsummer, 1875, was 17,600. In the half year ending Christmas 1875, it was only 1,400. But the winter was an exceptionally severe one, and the increase in the half-year ending Midsummer, 1876, has again risen to 17,252.

Figures and percentages are apt to leave rather a vague and shadowy impression, and it may help the reader to realise the difficulty as well as the extent of the problem practically presented to school board officers if I take four instances, at random, from the report of the London School Board. They seem to me to throw a vivid light on the infinite variety of domestic and social entanglements in which the enforcement of compulsion inevitably involves us.

"Richard Rust, 37 St. James's Road, was summoned for Richard, nine. The lad is a very bad one, and was rapidly going to ruin. The father having arranged with some friends in the country to take charge of him in the future, the summons was withdrawn upon payment of costs."

"Tomlin. In this case, notwithstanding that fines were imposed, and a warrant applied for, and granted, for the apprehension of the defendant, no good result ensued, as the warrant officer was unable to apprehend the father, who worked in the country, and seldom or never returned home except on Sundays. Application was made to the magistrate for a summons against the wife, on the ground that she had the 'actual custody.' This was granted, but she removed, and the Visitor has been unable to ascertain her address. She probably went into the country."

"Richard Raymond was summoned at Lambeth police-court for neglecting to cause his son, William, to attend school. The father stated that the boy

had been refused admission on account of an impediment in his speech. In order that inquiries might be made, Mr. Ellison adjourned the case for one week, when the statement of the father being proved false, a fine of 2s. and costs was inflicted."

"Henry Warner, summoned for his son, aged ten, pleaded that it was no fault of his, that his wife was master of the situation, and would not let the lad attend school. Case was adjourned for inquiry, which resulted in establishing the fact that the defendant was certainly not the master of his household; but the Magistrate said he ought to be, and fined him."

A family like Rust's shifts its residence out of London. The case drops out of the cognisance of those who have long been watching it, and new officers have to take it up from the very beginning. Tomlin's father is never at home except on Sundays, and when the school board officer summons the mother who has "the actual custody," Mrs. Tomlin slips through his fingers like an eel. Raymond's father pretends that he has an impediment, and that schools won't take him in. Poor Warner has a wife who won't let the lad attend school and won't let Warner send him there. There are forty cases for every one of these every week—two thousand times as many of such stories are told annually before the police courts of London—everyone of them with some ingenious variation of pretended excuse or some miserable and perplexing real difficulty.

The statistics of Liverpool are as follows:—The cost of compulsion is about 2s. per child on the roll—about 3s. per child in average attendance—which is about twice what it is in London. The increase in the average attendance on public elementary schools in five years is from 33,827 to 41,192, being 21 per cent as against the 8 per cent of Ireland, or the 75 per cent of London. The average attendance has fallen from 70 per cent to 64 per cent of the number on the roll, which is very significant of the class of children brought in by the

compulsory clauses. Besides the public schools, the authorities of Liverpool estimate that there were 10,958 on the roll of all other elementary schools in 1871, and 14,300 of all others in 1875. Liverpool has advanced; but very much more slowly than London. It started very much better than London did, and had far less leeway to make up. It is difficult precisely to compare its present educational position with that of London, because the non-public schools occupy much more of the ground in proportion than in the metropolis. Its population was 493,000 in 1871, and there were 14,000 seamen belonging to the port. So far as school attendance goes there is probably little now to choose between the two cities.

In Liverpool great attention is paid to the working of the compulsory bye-laws. In the year ending October 1, 1876, 6,182 notices were issued to parents, and 1,817 prosecutions took place in consequence. This would correspond to about 12,000 in London—the rate there being 8,000. Before the parent is prosecuted, parents are brought by the notices to meet a member of the Board and the Superintendent of Visitors, and such meetings are held two or three times a week. For instance, I am told, "In one small district, having about 2,000 children, the parents of 355 were brought before a member of the Board, and the present result is that 124 are regulars, 11 are delicate, 10 have removed, 6 are over age, one has been exempt, and there are 203 who are still irregular; 24 of these have been summoned more than once. Those from the 203 who are still irregular who have not been summoned are not considered irregular enough for a summons."

The statistics of Manchester are somewhat similar to those of Liverpool. The Manchester attendance returns were first collected by the Board in December, 1871. At that date the average attendance was 26,328, and the number on the roll was 39,240. The last quarterly returns for the quarter ending June,

1876, showed 32,220 children in average, and 50,461 in roll attendance. Thus, in $4\frac{1}{2}$ years, the average attendance has risen $22\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, or 5 per cent per annum. The population of Manchester has remained practically stationary during the time, so that the same extent of increase was not to be expected as in the case, for instance, of Glasgow and of London. But the general effect on the results of making the allowance would nowhere be of very great importance.

The regularity of attendance may be measured as usual by the proportion which the average bears to the roll attendance. It was 67 per cent in Manchester before compulsion; it is now 64 per cent, and the change signifies that a new class, whose attendance it is unusually difficult to secure or to make regular, has been brought into school. Attendance in Manchester has not fallen much under the pressure of the compulsory law, but it was not higher before, and it is a little lower now, than the average for all England and for Ireland.

The compulsory powers of the School Board are extensively used in Manchester. The clerk of the Board tells me that the recent average is 70 or 80 cases brought before the magistrate per week. The pressure is exercised on two grounds—non-attendance and irregular attendance—and the Board at present aims to constrain children to give at least 80 per cent of possible attendances. The population of Manchester is 351,000, so that 70 per week—say 3,500 per year—represents one prosecution for every 100 persons. But this rate is only the existing or recent rate. In the whole of 1875 there were only 1,039 prosecutions—say 20 per week, or 1 in 340 of the population. I suppose that the increased activity of prosecution is largely due to the rise in the increased number of attendances, from 50 to 80 per cent, required under recent bye-laws. In the last week of which I was told the prosecutions amounted to as many as 130, which is

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pretty much the same as for the ten times more populous city of London. I do not know the expense of school board prosecutions in Manchester. Both in that city and in Liverpool the attendance seems to have become slightly less regular under compulsion.

In Birmingham, the results are very remarkable. The city was the headquarters of the Education League, and that powerful and intelligent organization elected a majority of the School Board. *Noblesse oblige*. The first Birmingham Board felt itself bound to show what educational zeal could do. In December, 1871, the average attendance in public elementary schools was 16,263. Compulsion was not resorted to till May, 1872. Then and since then, the average has been—

December, 1871	16,263
May, 1872	20,028
" 1873	28,035
" 1874	30,339
" 1875	34,718
" 1876	35,817

Thus, in $4\frac{1}{2}$ years, the apparent increase in Birmingham has been 138 per cent. When account is taken of half-timers, according to the modes of computation of the Department, with which I need not trouble the reader, the increase in these $4\frac{1}{2}$ years is the prodigious one of 150 per cent. In addition to this, the proportion of average attendance to the roll attendance has risen from 62 to 70 per cent. These magnificent results make the record of the first two School Boards of Birmingham memorable in the educational annals of England. They have not been obtained, however, without great exertions and severe pressure. Since May, 1872, prosecution has been resorted to in 7,515 cases, an average of 1,900 annually. At that rate, the annual average for London, with its 306,000 of attendance should be 17,000 instead of 8,000. Birmingham manages compulsion cheaply. Prosecutions used to cost them 1,000*l.* annually, they now cost, under a system of specially reduced fees, only 300*l.* But the chief expense of

compulsion, in London and probably everywhere, is due to the staff of visitors. The mere legal expenses of compulsion in London were under 300*l.* in the half year ending Midsummer 1876.

The compulsory action taken in London, Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool, is very stringent. In London there is one prosecution annually for every 450 of the population; in Birmingham, about one for every 200; in Manchester, about one for every 100 at present, and about 1 for every 340 in 1875. To me it appears doubtful whether the poorer classes will long endure such a pressure with patience. As the conviction of the necessity of school attendance and the habit of obedience to the law deepens in the masses of the people, we may hope, doubtless, that the same results, or others even more satisfactory, may be obtained at a far lower cost of legal process, with all the hardships and harassments which it involves. But it is difficult to believe that so much pressure is necessary.

In these respects the procedure and experience of Glasgow are in remarkable contrast with that of England. The authorities started two years later than in England; and as new schools have often to be built before children can be driven to school, the first years of compulsory action are always the least effective. The results are these. In inspected schools, and not inspected efficient schools charging the same as board schools, there were

30,103 in average attendance in 1873	
36,568 " " 1874	
42,675 " " 1875	

The rise in two years has thus been 12,572, or 42 per cent—a rate almost as remarkable as that of Birmingham. The percentage of average attendance to roll attendance amounts to

79 per cent in 1873	
76 " " 1874	
78 " " 1875	

which is still more remarkable. The latest results (October 9) are that Glasgow has managed to raise her average

attendance to 84 per cent of the numbers on the roll. Some not inspected efficient schools are included in these estimates; but they are a small fraction of the whole, and their exclusion would not materially alter the proportions of increase. They account for about 3,000 children. Setting them aside, indeed, we should have an increase of 50 per cent in the two years in the inspected schools, which is nearly quite equal to that of Birmingham.

The remarkable part of the case of Glasgow is the manner in which the compulsory clauses have been worked. I have thus described the process elsewhere. "The Glasgow secret is very simple. The Board goes down among the defaulting parents, holding frequent meetings in their own localities to hear the stories of the poor and to persuade them for their own and their children's good. They try everything before they prosecute. They distribute fly-leaves copiously, narrating the facts, so as to make every actual prosecution go as far as possible in persuading other people. Gentleness would be useless without firmness, and the Glasgow Board has not worn its sword of justice altogether in vain; but it has shrunk from prosecutions with an energy and a success which, now that compulsion is to be universal, I hope we may see widely imitated. In some rural districts, and perhaps with sensible women for compulsory officers, prosecutions ought to be almost unnecessary. The fact that the law is in the background ought there, at least, to be generally sufficient." Many people seem to doubt the efficacy of "fly-leaves" and to want something a little more like fly-blisters. I quote from a speech delivered by Mr. Mitchell, the convener of the Glasgow School Attendance Committee, on October 9:—

"My belief is, that the fly-sheets on which a few of the worst cases are recorded, with the corresponding penalties, are far more effectual with flagrant defaulters than actual prosecution itself would be. They see there, or have read

to them, details of prosecutions wherein parents neglecting the education of their children have been fined and imprisoned, and the dread of a similar infliction on themselves has an effect probably more powerful than a sheriff's warrant. Those of us who witnessed the proceedings in the sheriff's court connected with the few prosecutions which we instituted last year must have been impressed with the conviction that the cure was nearly as bad as the disease. I am inclined to the belief that we have nearly as many necessary illustrations for our fly-leaves as may serve our purpose and prevent the need of prosecutions for many days to come."

I supplement what I have said above by Mr. Mitchell's further statement that the conduct of the school board officers has naturally animated the spirit of their masters:—

"Without doubt these meetings have had the best possible effect, both directly and indirectly. Still, I would remind the Board that for one parent dealt with in this way there are a hundred defaulting parents who have been induced to send their children to school by means altogether different. The call of the school board officer, the printed form setting forth the requirements of the Education Act, the persuasive remonstrance and warning which the officer plies *during repeated calls*—these have been by far the most effectual means in enabling us to reduce the number of defaulting parents. The officers, no doubt, who are always present at the Board Meetings with defaulting parents, have largely imbibed the spirit of forbearance and sympathy which the Board have shown to the poor people who are brought before them, and this has given them access to the parents, and a success in their work which they might not otherwise have attained."

The name of the convener of the Glasgow School Board School Attendance Committee will long be held in honour for a work unique in its character, and in its successful result. In the three years of his reign the School Attendance

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Committee has dealt with 20,515, less by removals, 2,819, and exemptions, 1,684—say 16,000 defaulting parents. Of these, 8,000 sent children to school after a remonstrance and personal warning by visit of the officers. 5,800 more went to school after notice sent to them warning them of the possibility of prosecution following that notice. The members of the School Board themselves met with the defaulting parents on eighteen separate occasions, and 1,400 children of the balance of nearly 2,200 were sent to school in consequence. *Only 51 have been prosecuted during the three years of the action of the Board.* Everything is done to avoid prosecutions—it is only when everything else fails that they are resorted to. The rate-payers' money is saved, the goodwill and the consciences of the people are enlisted in education, the work of future boards is made infinitely easier, and attendance more regular than elsewhere has been secured. No part of the labour of the Glasgow Board has been more profitable than the eighteen meetings held with defaulting parents, in different parts of the city where the people live, between February, 1874 and January, 1876. There were 1,834 parents summoned to meet the Board, representing 2,269 children. All but 250 of the parents answered. The Board divided itself into fragments, each sitting separately, and in the whole of a long day getting through about 100 cases each. Mr. Mitchell has shown how to meet the greatest difficulty of the compulsory system. His is a kindly and patriarchal government. Parents are, so far, reasonable creatures, and an ounce of gentle but firm persuasion seems to go as far with most of them as a pound of punishment. Even if, on a review of the whole circumstances, it might seem desirable, it might in some cases be difficult, to go back on the decided steps which have been taken. And these steps, it must be remembered, have been fairly effectual. In London and Birmingham the results obtained are undoubtedly satisfactory, and in Liverpool and Manchester they are

considerable. I do not pretend for a moment to criticise the action of men to whose admirable labours this country and these great communities are deeply indebted. I have no wish to make out percentages of credit for the different communities and school boards. If I did, I should certainly have to take account of an infinitude of circumstances which I have neglected here. I am dealing only with actual results. But nobody will doubt that persuasion, with punishment in the background, is a better way than punishment, if only it be a possible way; and Mr. Mitchell has shown that it is possible in Glasgow, whatever may be the truth with regard to other great cities which have acted more strictly. Half the country comes now, for the first time, under compulsory laws; and we may hope at least to disseminate education as widely as in Glasgow by the same wise and benevolent effort among a willing people.

Compulsion costs far less in proportion in Glasgow than in Liverpool; about 1s. 2d. per head of the average attendance; instead of 1s. 6d. in London, and 3s. in Liverpool. The amount, which is 2,400l., instead of 5,700l. per annum for Liverpool, is considerable, but it is less than that incurred by more stringent action. The process has, so far, been equally effectual, and it cannot fail to leave the poorer classes in favour of, whereas the other mode of action may, one fears, leave them hostile to, education.

There are few presentations of statistics to which some objection may not be taken, and the educational statistics of the large towns under school boards, and of the country so far as it is under the official cognizance of the Privy Council, can form no exception. Some private adventure schools for the classes that need elementary education still survive, and a few of them may be efficient. It would scarcely affect my figures, the main value of which is comparative, if I attempted to estimate these additional elements in the problem on the inadequate data which are alone

accessible. If we confine ourselves to the broad general conclusions which lie on the surface of the figures I have given,

I think we cannot go very far wrong. I throw together the results for the five cities:—

	Cost of compul- sion per child in average attendance.	Present rate of Cases prosecuted annually, of population.	Annual in- crease under compulsion in children taught.	Change under compulsion in regularity of attendance.
London . .	1s. 7d.	1 in 450	15	From 70 to 76½ per cent
Liverpool .	3s. 6d.	1 in 270	4	„ 70 to 64 „
Manchester.	—	1 in 100	5	„ 67 to 64 „
Birmingham	—	1 in 200	31	„ 62 to 70 „
Glasgow . .	1s. 2d.	1 in 20,000	25	„ 70 to 78 „

I have not taken into account the educational position of the great towns at the beginning of the compulsory era, and that is undoubtedly an element, and a considerable element, in the problem. But there is none of them in which there was not room for very great advances, and in most of them ample room is still left for increasing both the amount and the regularity of attendance. The population of Manchester, for instance, is 8,000 more than that of Birmingham, but the average attendance there is only 32,000, against 39,000 in Birmingham. The London average attendance would need to be something like 380,000, instead of 306,000, to reach the Birmingham level. The Glasgow attendance still remains very far below the point which it may be expected to reach. I have contented myself with recording the rate of advance from a position far behind that which the great cities have now reached, to one distinctly behind that to which they will probably soon attain.

There is another point to which I have adverted already. The Scotch Act does not, like the English Act, suggest and authorise the making of bye-laws requiring so many attendances out of the whole number possible. The Sheriff of Lanarkshire might refuse to recognise any standard the Glasgow Board inclined to set up. But the bye-laws regulating the amount of attendance with which the English Boards will be satisfied are permissive, and at their

own discretion, and if they choose they may dispense, and Mr. Hughes, a leading member of the Manchester School Board, seems to think that they ought to dispense, with such bye-laws. These rules multiply statutory offences according to an arbitrary definition. They create and as it were authorise a recognised minimum of attendance. The Birmingham Board have no minimum named, and are therefore much in the same position as the Glasgow Board. Their bye-laws require perfectly regular attendance, and they enforce them at their discretion. Perhaps the Glasgow Board and the other Scotch Boards could not if they had wished have prosecuted as frequently as their neighbours in England. Mr. Mitchell thinks so, and believes that a very great deal of the greater leniency and the smaller amount of prosecution in Scotland is due to the more lenient spirit of the framers of the Scotch Act. He is most probably right; and one of the main points to which I hope that this discussion may direct the attention of school boards is the policy or impolicy of very numerous and stringent bye-laws. But I must again disclaim any wish to assign credit to individual boards, or to seem to sit in judgment on their conduct. I ask the reader's attention solely to the action which has in fact been taken, and to the results which it has actually produced.

I think that my figures conclusively prove that the best results, both in

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increased quantity and in regularity of attendance, are not necessarily connected with the strictest working of the compulsory law. Manchester, which seems at present to be strictest, and Liverpool, which is third on the list, are lowest in both respects. Birmingham, which is second in strictness, is highest in increased quantity, as well as in actual amount, of education, and third in respect of regularity of attendance, which has risen there in a remarkable degree. London, which seems most lenient of the four great English cities, has increased education much more rapidly than Manchester or Liverpool, though it seems to have now reached very much the same level in respect of quantity. It has a more regular attendance than either of these cities or than Birmingham. Glasgow, which in respect of compulsory action by legal process is almost ludicrously lenient in comparison with the other cities, stands highest in respect of the regularity of attendance obtained, and second in respect of the increased quantity of education. Of course neither Glasgow nor any other Board can reap where it has not sowed, and the paucity of legal processes is no sign that the Glasgow Board did not spend an indefinite amount of labour in securing the results it has obtained. I am speaking only of the last resort to the pains and

penalties of law, and I think I can scarcely be mistaken in saying that my figures almost disprove the theory that the tighter the screw is pressed down in the way of actual punishment the more effective must the pressure become.

I do not care to press the inferences that the facts I have collated seem to me to establish any farther than these five conclusions:—

1. That the need of the country for compulsory education was a crying need in 1870.
2. That the success of the experiment which has now been tried in Scotland, and in nearly half of England, justifies the modest advances that have been made by the Government in the Bill of the present year.
3. That compulsion has been carried out in one great city with perfect efficiency, and with a very trifling amount of legal process.
4. That no connection between stringent *legal* compulsory action and great educational result is indicated by the figures. It is almost needless to say that I do not suppose that a school board can safely leave the matter to take care of itself.
5. That there is no agency short of compulsion which can bring Ireland on a level, in popular education, with her sister countries.

WILLIAM JACK.

THE EASTERN QUESTION FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE EASTERN CHRISTIANS.

[The following communication from a Servian politician of eminence, resident at Belgrade, has reached the editor while the magazine was in the press. The author is well known in England, but for obvious reasons he desires his name to remain unknown for the present.]

So much has been written on the Eastern question that the subject would seem to be exhausted. Not at all. The Eastern question continues to be imperfectly known even in regard to its essential and fundamental points. In spite of articles which have really thrown flashes of light on the situation of the Christian populations of European Turkey—for it is with Turkey in Europe alone that I propose to occupy myself—the majority of journalists and other writers who have treated and still treat the question, give proofs every day of a knowledge so superficial of the geographical, ethnographical, and statistical conditions of the country, of the history of the greater part of its inhabitants, of their actual social state, and their true aspirations in regard to the future, that those who live in Eastern Europe, and have some knowledge of what is passing around them, cannot but smile as they read. This comparative ignorance on the part of the European public in regard to the East of Europe has been made very apparent by the present war; and publicists, who have not mastered even its elementary facts, have the presumption to put forward solutions of this Oriental question, abounding in internal complications, with external ones of equal difficulty superimposed; a question, moreover, of the very highest importance from its bearing on the interests,

present and future, of Europe and the entire world.

This ignorance, to some extent pardonable, and this levity, quite unpardonable, have, since the commencement of the present century, led to the commission of enormous faults, which have cost Europe thousands of victims, sacrificed without reason, and millions of money absolutely wasted. Meantime the Eastern question has not advanced one inch. On the contrary, the difficulties of its solution have been increased, the situation of the Eastern Christians, as well as of the Porte itself, has been rendered intolerable, and diplomacy has shown itself more irrelative than ever.

I have said that the comparative ignorance of Western Europe in regard to the East was to some extent pardonable; for, apart from the little interest taken in separating the numerous threads with which the Eastern question is interwoven, the Ottoman Porte and the Governments of Austria and England, interested in maintaining the *status quo*, have always misrepresented the character and significance of the events occurring in the Slavo-Hellenic peninsula, though they have often been of a nature to open the eyes of the European public, and to secure for the question the serious and persistent attention of studious men.

The writer of these lines does not propose to correct the false ideas, or supply the omissions which might be pointed out in connection with the Eastern question; still less would he presume to offer a solution which might satisfy every one, more or less. He desires only, in his character of Eastern Christian, to set forth exactly the views, sentiments, and aspirations which urge

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¹ Dan
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the Christian populations of Turkey to action ; the historical and national sources, as well as the social causes, from which these views, aspirations, and sentiments spring ; the grounds on which they are based, or their want of basis ; and finally, the difficulties internal and external against which they have to contend. It will consequently be necessary to say something on the ancient and modern history of these populations, on their present social conditions, and the mode in which the different races might bring themselves into accord in order to realize their own legitimate aspirations while reconciling them with the general interests of Europe and with the course of action pursued towards them by diplomacy. In this last respect the writer will above all bear in view the policy of Turkey, of Austria, of Russia, and of England, such as it appears to the eyes of these populations, and such as it is in reality.

In this manner the English public may be enabled to form an exact idea of the true state of things in the Slavo-Hellenic peninsula, and perhaps to come to some decision as to what policy would be the most just and the most opportune for England to follow in regard to it.

As the question derives its main interest from actual occurrences, I have determined in this brief study to adopt a method the exact opposite of the ordinary one. I shall begin by setting forth and seeking to appreciate at their true value the events taking place before our eyes. These I shall afterwards trace back to their causes, more or less distant. In doing so, I shall have recourse to a pamphlet¹ which I published in 1865. What I then foresaw has been strangely realized. I was careful and conscientious then ; I shall not be less so now.

"As the Eastern question," I wrote eleven years ago, "is advancing with rapid steps towards its final crisis, we shall not be astonished, some fine day, to find the majority of statesmen sur-

prised by a sudden explosion, and placed face to face with events which they thought still remote, but which will nevertheless be pressing and irresistible. From this crisis may arise a state of things in harmony with the general interests of Europe, if Europe has taken care to prepare for it. Up to the present time, however, it must be confessed that Europe has given no great attention to the matter ; and it is easy to foresee what the result of this negligence must be. Once awakened by the explosion, the cabinets will desire to act. But will they then be able to do so efficiently ? Is it not possible that a more powerful will, occupied long beforehand in preparing the ground, in seizing upon the principal means of action, and combining everything so as more surely to attain its end, may prove itself stronger than they, and capable of taking the direction of events ? For our part we begin to entertain serious fears as to the inevitable consequences of the hesitation shown by certain cabinets in reference to the question, of the persistence of others in seeking to maintain it in a state of complete stagnation, and finally, of the imprudent, if not guilty, toleration of the Ottoman rule shown by all—a toleration which has its origin either in baseless apprehensions or in egoistical calculations."

The accuracy of this forecast need not be pointed out in the presence of recent events. The insurrectional movement in the Slavonian provinces of Turkey broke out just when Europe least expected it ; and even without the co-operation of the other indigenous races, was sufficient to bring up the question of the East in all its breadth and gravity. Diplomacy, suddenly awakened, has been endeavouring for more than fifteen months, by one means and another, to extinguish the volcano. But all its efforts, met by the firm, unalterable determination of the Slavonian rayahs and vassals to shake off the Turkish yoke or die, prove but one thing—its impotence. Among all the Powers Russia alone dominates the situation ; and but for the moderation

¹ *Dangers de la Question d'Orient, par un Observateur Impartial*. Paris : chez E. Dentu. 1865.

and pacific leanings of the Emperor Alexander, Europe would at this moment be plunged in a war as ruinous and as barren as that of the Crimea. Count Andrassy with his "*status quo* ameliorated," and Mr. Disraeli with his squadron in Besika Bay, thought once more to conjure away the danger. Strange want of foresight! The danger did but increase daily, until at last it reached such a point that Count Andrassy was obliged to abandon his "*status quo* ameliorated," while Mr. Disraeli thought it prudent suddenly to beat a retreat, and to go beyond even the clauses of the Berlin Memorandum, to which, in the first instance, he had refused his adhesion. Never did the minister of a Great Power sign in so humiliating a manner the certificate of his own incompetence, or meet on the part of the public opinion of his country with so complete and emphatic a disavowal. The English nation has thus not only saved its honour, but has given a proof of the superiority of its political wisdom over that of the advisers of the Crown, men who have grown old in routine, and think the East as stationary as themselves.

No half measures, in whose efficacy only the merest mediocrity can henceforth believe, not all the fleets in the world, can restore peace to the Christians of the East, and arrest the decomposition of an empire which, under existing conditions, is impossible in modern Europe. Profound modifications must be introduced into its system, so as to impart to it new vitality, or it must be abandoned to its inevitable fate. Whatever motives may actuate Russia—even should they have their origin in ambition alone—it is certain that the cabinet of St. Petersburg judges correctly when it refuses to see any means of really ameliorating the condition of the Eastern Christians except in the adoption of the autonomic system, disengaged as much as possible from the obstacles which the Porte will be certain to throw continually in the way of its development. This is what constitutes the moral force of Russia

among the Eastern Christians, and also among the civilised nations of Europe. And it is this which must lead, a little sooner or a little later, to the definitive triumph of her policy, provided only that she carries it out with resolution and disinterestedness.

The same causes will produce the same effects; and so long as the Christians are governed by a Turkish administration, revolts will continue to take place. Let us put aside for the moment remote causes of a higher order. The immediate cause of all disturbances in the East is the Ottoman administration. Of this enough is known in England to make it unnecessary for me to qualify it. The conviction is deeply-rooted in the minds of all the Christians of Turkey that no Turkish functionary, however excellent he may otherwise be, will sincerely apply the principle of equality in the case of a Christian. Never can he administer justice with impartiality. His nature, his education, his inmost antipathies render it impossible for him to do so. The punishments to which Christians are condemned are always humiliating or cruel, and leave in the hearts of the victims an ardent desire for vengeance. It is this administration which has been at the bottom of all the insurrections in European Turkey since the compliment was paid to the Mussulmans of admitting them to the rank of civilised peoples. It was the determining cause of the rising last year in the Herzegovina and Bosnia, and this year in Bulgaria. The Turko-Servian war must also be laid to its charge. These events were intimately connected, followed one another naturally, and will infallibly be succeeded by others of the same character, unless their development be arrested as soon as possible by the conclusion of peace.

The Porte has always been clever enough to attribute the revolts of the Christians to the propagandism of Russian, Bulgarian, and Servian committees, in order not to have to confess that they had their origin in the indescribable conduct of its own

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administration. Even if these committees existed with revolutionary programmes, they would certainly have no hold on subjects contented with their lot. But the fact is there is nowhere either a Servian or a Montenegrin committee, while the Slavonian committees of Russia act publicly, and in general have no other objects than the maintenance of orthodox churches—which the Mussulman population is always ready to attack—and the furnishing of assistance to the unhappy victims of the injustice, cupidity, and cruelty of the Turkish functionaries. The Russian committees present a strong resemblance to the Anglo-American Bible Society. The one Bulgarian committee, sitting in Roumania, had a revolutionary object; but are not the atrocities committed by the Turks in Bulgaria sufficient to justify its existence? This committee moreover acted independently. It had no understanding with Belgrade, Cettigne, Moscow, or St. Petersburg, and it was precisely for that reason that its enterprise miscarried. The most striking proof of the fact that there was no connexion between the movements which broke out in Turkey and the pretended revolutionary centres of Belgrade, Cettigne, Moscow, and St. Petersburg, is the variety of the dates at which these were begun and the different directions which they took. The germs of insurrection showed themselves in Herzegovina during the winter before last, after more than ordinary vexations on the part of the Turkish authorities, who forced a great number of Herzegovinians to take refuge in Montenegro. Returning home on the faith of promises made by these same authorities, many of them were treacherously killed, and it was this that led, at the beginning of July, to the armed rising. The movement soon spread to Bosnia; but in both provinces, instead of approaching the Servian frontier, as it infallibly would have done had Servia been its focus, it extended in quite an opposite direction—in the Herzegovina towards the frontier of Dalmatia, and in Bosnia towards

that of Croatia. Thus instead of approaching the Principality of Servia, the movement went away from it. The same thing may be remarked in Bulgaria. There the insurrection broke out ten months later, far enough from the Servian frontier, to go further from it still, in the direction of the Black Sea and the Danube. These facts prove sufficiently that the accusation launched by the Porte, of revolutionary movements proceeding from the outside to disturb its internal tranquillity, is a pure calumny—a means adopted by the Turkish ministers for concealing from Europe the true origin of these movements which are periodically renewed. That means, however, has so often been employed that it can no longer serve to mystify Europe.

The Porte has at the same time thrown upon Servia the responsibility of the present war, which it accuses it of having declared. The accusation at first sight appears true, for the Servian army was really the first to pass the frontier. But it is sufficient to recall even in a cursory manner the events of last year to be convinced that the steps taken by the Porte were all of a nature to make Servia fear invasion, and urge her to extreme measures in the interests of her own preservation. To arrive at the truth in this matter, it is necessary to scrutinize the conduct of the cabinets of Belgrade and of the Porte since the commencement of the Herzegovinian insurrection. Hardly had the news reached Servia than Servian volunteers hurried to the frontier in sufficient numbers to form two bands. This first impulse on the part of the population of the Principality was arrested by an order from the Government forbidding the formation of new bands. At the same time Prince Milan gave the most formal assurance of his pacific intentions both to the Porte and to the guaranteeing Powers. And in effect he never ceased to oppose with success the warlike current of public opinion which had gained even the National Assembly. All the petitions for assistance which

the insurgents addressed to the Government and the Assembly remained fruitless. The Prince by this course chilled all the sentiments and aspirations of his people, and at the same time exposed himself to the danger of a terrible insurrection within his own frontiers; but he was determined not to break his word to the Porte and the European Powers. Meantime, the ministers of the Sultan, instead of lightening his difficult task, increased its burdens and its dangers. Instead of occupying themselves seriously with the means of subduing the revolt, they concentrated on the frontiers of the Principality all the forces of which they could dispose. This hostile demonstration had no effect but to rouse the warlike feelings of the Servian population to the highest pitch, and to convince it that the Porte was preparing to invade the country. This opinion took the more consistence from the fact that Midhat and Avni Pashas had committed the imprudence of saying openly that it was necessary to strike the insurrection of the rayahs at the heart—that is to say, in Servia. To calm the excitement and prepare for all eventualities, the Prince found himself obliged to send troops to the frontier, and in view of their small number, to protect them by means of fortifications. Thus the first step of hostilities was taken by the Porte, while the Principality in return did no more than take measures of precaution. At the approach of winter the Servian troops were disbanded. The Porte, however, left its soldiers on the frontier, where it put them into winter quarters. This was a fresh subject of mistrust for the Servians. As the spring approached the Turks gradually assumed a more menacing air. The number of their troops was constantly increased by the arrival of Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians. Fortifications were erected all round the Servian frontiers; they were armed with cannons, and held by troops. Servia's repeated remonstrances at Constantinople on the uselessness, and even danger, inseparable from the presence

of military forces on the frontiers of a country already over-excited, though perfectly tranquil, having been without effect, the Government and the people at last became convinced that the Porte really meditated a *coup de main* against the Principality. It was only then that the national militia were sent back to the frontier, while the completion of the fortifications was hastily proceeded with, and all necessary measures were taken for an energetic defence. But the idea of attacking the Turks was still far from Prince Milan's intentions. At this moment the revolt broke out suddenly in Bulgaria. During its entire continuance the Servians preserved a strict neutrality, thus rendering the work of suppression easy for the Porte, and giving at the same time a fresh proof of their loyalty. But the Turkish soldiers, intoxicated with Bulgarian blood, carried away by unbridled fanaticism, and allured by the attraction of booty, could no longer remain tranquil on the frontiers of the Principality. Detachments of Bashi-Bazouks, led by officers of the regular army, violated the Servian territory daily at various points, killed the frontier guards and shepherds, carried off the cattle, and set fire to houses isolated from the villages, and to a church. The districts on the frontier were thus kept in continual alarm, and the people were often obliged to take up arms and themselves pursue the enemy. Blood flowed, pillage and incendiarism were the order of the day, and a frontier war had already been begun and was being carried on by the Turks, without its being possible for the Servians to bring it to an end. Did not the Porte desire in this manner to provoke Servia to pass the frontier in order to be able to say that she had been attacked? There is every ground for believing that she did. The Porte knew very well that Prince Milan could not always maintain a situation which condemned his people to support the burden of war in the midst of peace, and that he would be forced to escape from it by one way or another. Means of conciliation had

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been exhausted. Diplomacy had up to that time succeeded in nothing—neither in calming the insurrection in the Servian provinces, nor in preventing the fearful scenes which were taking place in Bulgaria, nor in securing respect for the territory of Servia, whose inviolability was nevertheless guaranteed by Europe. To hope for efficacious protection from diplomacy was under the circumstances quite useless; and all that remained was to repel force by force, to keep the scourge of war as far as possible from the frontier, and to remove for ever the causes of its return. The causes lay in the political and social condition of the neighbouring Servian provinces; a condition which led to periodical revolts, attended by moral and material consequences as inevitable as they were pernicious for Servia.

Reduced to this extremity, Prince Milan, before replying to an undeclared and perfidious war by an open and loyal one, resolved to essay one last means of conciliation. He had already in November sent Mr. Philip Christitch, the minister unattached, to Montenegro, to come to an understanding with Prince Nicholas as to the conduct which the sister Principalities were to pursue towards their over-excited subjects; towards the Christian insurgents who refused to lay down their arms, and were begging for succour; towards the Porte, which was provoking a declaration of war; and towards the Great Powers, who unanimously counselled peace. Never before had a situation presented itself more complicated, more insoluble, more pregnant with danger. The first step decided upon at Cettigne was quite of a pacific nature. The two princes were to present separately to the guaranteeing Powers an identical Note, praying them to cause the bloodshed to cease by ameliorating the situation of the Christians in such a positive manner as might inspire them with confidence. In case of this step proving fruitless, and of the insurrection continuing, a second one was to be taken. It consisted in sending an address to the

Porte, proposing the pacification of the insurgent provinces by means of an autonomous administration entrusted for Bosnia to Prince Milan, and for the Herzegovina to Prince Nicholas. An annual tribute was to be paid into the Ottoman treasury, so as not to prejudice its financial interests; and, in order to leave intact the integrity of the empire, Prince Nicholas¹ was to recognise the suzerainty of the Sultan over Herzegovina. The two princes were dissuaded from the first of these steps, which did not seem likely to lead to anything. Such indeed proved to be the case, when the Great Powers themselves recommended it. The second step remained, but was adjourned for a time. Meanwhile the Berlin Memorandum had foundered, the insurrection had broken out in Bulgaria, and the invasion of Servia was already indicated by the guerilla war which the Turks were waging on the frontiers. It was then that Prince Milan decided to adopt the second step, and accordingly instructed the same person who had been sent to Cettigne to proceed to Constantinople. But the Porte declared that this mission was inopportune, and Sir Henry Elliot assured the Servian agent at the Turkish capital that if the Prince's envoy came to Constantinople to propose the extension of the Servian administration to Bosnia, he would not be received by the Sultan's ministers. Rebuffed in this manner, Mr. Christitch made a last attempt, and submitted to the Divan in writing the proposition he had been charged to lay before it. When the Servian agent presented the document to the Grand Vizier, the latter refused even to take cognisance of it, far less to give a reply. All means of coming to an understanding having thus been exhausted, the war began.

Whose fault was it? Count Andrassy's "ameliorated *status quo*" had not succeeded, by reason of its inadequacy. The Berlin Memorandum had been

¹ It must be remembered that Prince Nicholas does not acknowledge the suzerainty of the Porte in regard to Montenegro, as Prince Milan does in regard to Servia.—*Editor*.

rejected; Servia's propositions had not been even heard; and meanwhile the insurrection continued in Bosnia and Herzegovina, that of Bulgaria had been extinguished in blood in such a manner as to excite the horror and indignation of all the civilised world, while Servia, first menaced, had at last been harassed into war—on one side, in short, all possible endeavours to bring about peace and a durable peace; on the other provocations, and everything that was calculated to render disturbances in Eastern Europe perpetual. Such are the facts as they really occurred. Let the reader judge of them for himself.

The insurrections of the Herzegovina, of Bosnia, and of Bulgaria marked the first phase of the recent events in the East; the Turko-Servian war marks the second.

This war offers to the world the rare spectacle of two little Principalities, with a population of scarcely a million and a half, standing out, in spite of the disapprobation of the European cabinets, against a colossal empire, which opposes them with forces drawn from three parts of the world. On the side of the Turks we find superiority of numbers, arms, organization, and military experience. The Servians have only their national militia, which had never been under fire, is not accustomed to military discipline, and is armed in great part with old-fashioned guns. Notwithstanding this immense inequality, the Turks, after three months and a half of open war, are far from having overcome the Principalities, and have only just succeeded in breaking into their territory at some points on the frontier. Indeed even this slight advantage is counterbalanced by the occupation of the Turkish territory at several points by the Servians and Montenegrins. The only result hitherto is a drawn game. The Turks, after efforts which have lasted three months, are still powerless to force the fortified lines of the Servians and Montenegrins, who have inflicted upon them some severe lessons. Equality between the

combatants is now, however, at an end, and the Servo-Montenegrins are beginning to get the upper hand. They will have it completely if the war continues. It seems to be only a question of time.

To such a point is that formidable Ottoman empire reduced, which once made all Europe tremble.

There are writers who exhibit surprise at seeing Turkey display even such force as it has shown; and who, from the fanaticism awakened in the mass of the Mussulman population, conclude that there is still vitality in that empire. For my part, I can see in it nothing but a confession of extreme weakness on the part of the Turkish Government; and on the part of the Turkish masses a last effort of barbarism, conscious that its end is approaching. If the Porte had really felt itself strong enough to subdue its Christian subjects and vassals, it would never have had recourse to such extreme measures as the awakening of Mussulman fanaticism, knowing very well that it thus ran the risk of alienating all the Powers. Its policy was that of despair. For the rest, the stirring up of fanaticism had results which were slender enough in a military point of view, but immense and fatal in a social and political sense. The Sophtas, the Circassians, and the Bashi-Bazouks were neither very numerous nor very eager to take up arms; and they showed themselves very bad soldiers, much more fanatical for rapine than for religion. To them is due the impassable abyss which has been dug between the Turkish and the Christian populations of the state, and the conviction, moreover, which has been forced upon all Europe, that such an empire can no longer subsist on European soil. In letting loose the ferocity of these savages, the Porte committed moral suicide before the civilised world.

But the present war has had other results not less fatal for Turkey. Besides weakening her military resources, it has absolutely exhausted her finances. Material bankruptcy and moral bankruptcy have gone hand in hand. Such is my view of the asserted vitality of

the Ottoman Empire ; and it is shared by all the Eastern Christians.

The Porte has always been the artificer of its own misfortunes, and is now more so than ever. In spite of the miserable and desperate condition to which it finds itself reduced, it persists with inconceivable obstinacy in refusing to accede to the armistice asked for by all the Powers. It does not even seem to recognise the gravity of the danger which menaces it ; and its organs in the Turkish language threaten in their frenzy to exterminate not only all the Christians of the empire, but all the European nations, including the English. This outburst of rage took place on its becoming known at Constantinople that Serbia had refused the prolongation of the truce. But to whom was the refusal due ? To Russia, reply those who see in all things and everywhere the secret intrigues of the St. Petersburg cabinet. But since the Turks behaved treacherously during the first eight days of the truce, attacking the Servian troops at six different points, and throwing two bridges over the Morava, no Russian intrigues were necessary to make the Servians understand that such a truce was but a trap, into which it would be folly to fall a second time. The Turkish ministers then took a more roundabout way to invalidate the armistice which the Powers continued to require. They accepted it, but in such a manner as to render it unacceptable to the Servians and Montenegrins, who, having no troops but the national militia, snatched away from agriculture, handicraft, and commerce, could not accept an armistice of six months (which might end in renewal of war) without ruining themselves in every respect. To this a continuation of the war would be infinitely preferable.

But the manœuvres of the Porte did not end there. To elude the proposition of autonomy which the Powers had made in favour of Herzegovina, Bosnia, and Bulgaria, it made the counter proposition of a general reform of the empire. Putting aside the innate absur-

dity of the idea of constitutional government in a Mohammedan country, the project as conceived by the Porte revealed a covert intention of rendering its results as barren as those of all preceding reforms have been. The National Council, proposed with so much gravity by the statesmen of Stamboul, was to consist of a hundred and twenty members, of whom fifty-one would be Christians and sixty-nine Mussulmans ; thirty-five to be elected at Constantinople, fifty-five to be elected in the rest of the empire, and thirty to be named by the Government ! One may safely say that in such a council, even with all personal security for freedom of speech, the voice of the Christians would be smothered by the Mussulman majority. Apart from this drawback, which alone would render such a council valueless for the Christians, in what would its duties consist ? In verifying the budget of income and expenditure, in examining questions of public works, and in regulating affairs of internal administration. I am convinced that such an assembly would change absolutely nothing in the actual system of the empire, just as the system of Mussulman autonomy in the vilayets has been powerless to prevent all kinds of injustice and iniquity, of which the natural end was insurrection. It must be admitted once for all that autonomy, with an exclusively Mussulman administration, is impossible in Turkey. It can only give good results both for Christian and Mussulman inhabitants if the administrators are exclusively or in great majority Christians, and not directly dependent on the Central Government at Constantinople. The empire, to be really regenerated in Europe, must be decentralised in an administrative point of view, as it was in the days of the first sultans, who left to all the provinces which had formed part of the ancient Servian kingdom the right of governing themselves, in consideration of paying tribute and furnishing a military contingent in time of war. In the course of centuries the Porte has destroyed, partly by stratagem, partly by violence, the internal

liberty of these provinces, so that insurrection has now become almost their normal condition. To recover itself the Porte must return to the system which formerly constituted its strength, and apply it to all its Slavo-Greek provinces in Europe. In Asia alone can it maintain the centralising system with the introduction of such modifications as a Mussulman state may be able to admit.

Notwithstanding the pride, ill-founded as it may be, of the Turks, and their extreme blindness, it is impossible to explain the obstinacy with which for a month and a half they have resisted the representations of all Europe, except on the supposition that in spite of the apparent agreement between the Powers, they must be secretly encouraged by some of them. Austro-Hungary is known not to be favourable to the introduction of autonomy in the insurgent provinces. Mr. Disraeli has apparently accepted the idea, but probably less from conviction than from the pressure of public opinion in England. The cabinets of Vienna and London are accordingly thought, rightly or wrongly, to be urging the Porte in an underhand manner to persist in its attitude of resistance. This suspicion on the part of the Eastern Christians has been strongly confirmed, since it has been seen that the *Levant Herald*, the organ of the English Embassy at Constantinople, is the first to advise the Porte to adopt a compromise, "in order to avoid the grave proposals of the guaranteeing Powers, and to save the honour and interests of the empire." "Why," asks the *Levant Herald*, "have an administrative autonomy for these provinces and not for all?" . . . "The Turkish Government may reply that Albania, Macedonia, Thessaly, Epirus, and Thrace are as important in its eyes as the Herzegovina, Bosnia, or Bulgaria, and that there is no reason why one province should be preferred to another, still less why insurrections should be rewarded. Let the Porte forestall the Great Powers by granting a general administrative reform, and the mouths of its advisers are closed." The

Forakir, an Armenian journal, caught up the ball set flying by the *Levant Herald*, and, adopting its proposition, continued, "Why in Europe alone, and not in Asia? Are there not Christians also in this country, and do they not suffer from the same persecutions?"

The suggestion of the *Levant Herald*, taken up by the *Forakir*, was the star of safety for the Porte, whose high functionaries rejected the propositions of the Great Powers by proposing instead the creation of local administrations in each province, with a central elective and mixed assembly for foreign affairs and for the empire as a whole.

These facts need no comment, and they justify the suspicions entertained by the Eastern Christians, that the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and, above all, the English cabinet, in spite of the wishes of the nation, are seeking at Constantinople to interpose obstacles that shall prevent the success of European diplomacy. The English cabinet, first by rejecting openly the Berlin Memorandum, and now by secretly undermining the propositions to which it has adhered, has done much to cause both the outbreak and the continuance of the Turko-Servian war, and to render itself morally responsible for ulterior events. Burning with desire to outwit Prince Gortchakoff, the cabinet does not perceive that it may end by becoming his dupe.

Count Andrassy is in the same position. Opposing all idea of extending the frontiers of Servia by the annexation of Bosnia, under the pretext that a Slavonian state of any considerable extent would be dangerous for Austro-Hungary, he is far from keeping in view the true interests of his empire, and does but favour the passions and projects, as ambitious as they are impracticable, of the Magyars in regard to the South Slavonians. A state much more vast, and much more populous, has been formed on the eastern frontier of Austria, under the name of Roumania. Austria opposed the union of Moldavia with Wallachia, as she now opposes that

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of Bosnia with Servia.¹ But the first combination has not injured it, nor would the second. The Servian state, even when increased by all the territory of Bosnia, would scarcely number three million souls, and to appear to dread such a state is to give Europe a bad idea of the consistency of an empire so great as that of the Hapsburgs. Count Andrassy's policy is singularly undecided; it is without any clear or practical aim. The Austro-Hungarian Chancellor rejects all idea of the annexation of Bosnia and of the Herzegovina to Austria; he certainly would not like to see the Russians established in these provinces; nor will he hear of the formation of a Servian state. What then would he have? "A *status quo* ameliorated;" that is to say, the impracticable, the impossible.

Thus the cabinet of Vienna, not less than that of London, is a great hindrance to the other Powers in the way of re-establishing and consolidating the peace of Eastern Europe. Through the fault of these two cabinets, Europe is wandering further and further from its object. The insurrection and the war do not cease; new complications may be expected through the popular movement that has at last begun in Greece, and now threatens the East with a general conflagration; while the Emperor Alexander, in his turn recognising the impossibility of resisting much longer the impulses of his people, is already meditating the occupation of Bulgaria, leaving that of the Herzegovina and Bosnia to Austro-Hungary. The more plans are altered, the more decisions are delayed, the more is the peace of Europe imperilled, and the more are the Eastern populations made to suffer. That is what the policy of England and of Austro-Hungary is leading to.

A politician belonging to this latter state, consulted not long ago as to the motives which had induced the cabinet of Vienna to reject the proposition of

Russia to occupy, conjointly with Austria, the insurgent provinces of Turkey, gave the following reasons:—"Admitting even that the proposition was made—which I think very doubtful—the cabinet of Vienna could not have accepted it without falling out on one side with the Magyars, and without, on the other, helping Russia to put an end to the Ottoman rule in Europe, as well as to sap the foundations of our monarchy. It is said that this occupation would only amount to a guarantee for the execution of the reforms demanded from the Porte. Now as these reforms would be realised either too late or not at all, Russia would have a pretext for remaining a long time in Bulgaria; and its occupation would soon take the form of conquest. We should do the same, you would say, in Bosnia and in the Herzegovina. But of what advantage would that be if Russia had once succeeded in installing herself definitively in a portion of the Balkan peninsula. From that point to the realisation of a Pan Slavonian Empire, which would swallow up Austro-Hungary, there is but a step. It would be preferable for Russia to declare war against the Porte on her own account, provided she engaged formally to claim no increase of territory for herself."

If this should really happen, if Russia should take up the noble mission of rescuing the Slavonians of Turkey from a yoke which is insupportable to them, and is constantly threatening the peace of the world, and that without any ulterior ambition or selfish aim—the triumph of its policy over that of England and Austria would be not less complete, and certainly much more honourable, than in the case of a war ending with territorial aggrandisements. In lieu of a material, she would gain a moral advantage, and one that would be immense and full of consequences in the future. Her influence in the East would be almost equivalent to dominion, without raising the embarrassments by which actual dominion could not fail to be

¹ It had been argued that Austria's Wallachian subjects in Transylvania would be dangerously agitated by the formation of a Wallachian state in their close vicinity.—*Ed.*

accompanied. Such is at bottom the true motive which urges the cabinet of Vienna to oppose the formation of any more Slavonian states in its immediate neighbourhood, and which makes Mr. Disraeli fear that their frail and ephemeral existence would after a time disappear in the waves of the Russian Ocean, which would gradually extend to the Straits of the Dardanelles.

In this apprehension on the part of England and Austria there is nothing to blame. But is there no other way of meeting the danger anticipated than by condemning ten millions of Eastern Christians to the continuance of a degrading slavery, which they will no longer tolerate, and thus supporting the cause of an empire which it is impossible to save by administrative

plasterings on paper? Instead of little autonomous states, easily influenced, separated by petty rivalries, and incapable of real progress, through a thousand internal causes, why not create a Bulgaro-Servian state and a Greek state, without destroying the integrity of the Ottoman empire? Then in place of a divided, feeble East, accessible to all influences, you would have a compact powerful East, with important interests to defend, which it would be capable of defending with success. In this manner you would have erected a strong barrier against all the ambitions which you fear, and would have re-established the East on its natural foundations, while at once securing the happiness of the Christian populations and regenerating the Ottoman empire.

BELGRADE, Oct. 16.

To be continued.

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NOTE TO SIR CHARLES DILKE'S ARTICLE ON "ENGLISH INFLUENCE IN CHINA."

IN an article on English Influence in China, published in *Macmillan's Magazine* for October, Sir Charles Dilke writes as follows:—"We allow our whole trade with Central Asia to be stopped by the tolls that our Cashmere feudatories levy, and are shocked and horrified beyond measure if the Chinese presume to raise from our people their ordinary dues. . . . Shanghai merchants, on their shooting expeditions, travel like princes in the interior with a numerous suite, their extra-territoriality, or exemption from the law, being at the same time preserved. In the valley of Cashmere, ruled by a prince feudatory to ourselves, whose father we first set upon the throne, no such liberality exists. There our sportsmen and our officers travelling for their health are not only compelled to make use of passports, but are tied down by local rules as to the rate at which they shall move, and the number of servants in their retinue."

It is not to be supposed that Sir Charles Dilke would knowingly misstate facts, or would willingly cause pain and do injustice to one of the most enlightened and loyal of her Majesty's Indian feudatories; and as I am sure that the Editor of *Macmillan's Magazine* will not refuse permission, to any one who can do so, to correct the very important mistake made by the able author of the article from which the above quotation has been taken, I therefore address this letter to you.

Sir Charles Dilke's remarks, with reference to the supposed obstructive policy of the Cashmere government are about as apposite as would be the remarks by some uninformed foreigner on the supposed protective character of the English tariff. Years ago such remarks might have been applicable. They are no longer so. In

1870 Lord Mayo pointed out to the Maharaja of Cashmere the oppressive nature of his administration, and called on him to reduce within reasonable limits the transit duties levied on the trade between India and Central Asia. As soon as the Maharaja understood fully the wishes of the English Government, and the necessity for encouraging the very slender trade then beginning to spring up between India and the inhabitants of Eastern Turkestan, he not merely agreed to abolish undue exactions, but he went farther, and by written treaty swept away the entire transit duties on goods passing through his dominions. More than this: when the last mission to Kashghar was despatched by Lord Northbrook, it had to pass through the Maharaja's territories, and was dependent on his good offices, not merely for baggage animals and supplies in transit to and fro, but during the whole sojourn of the mission in Kashghar territory, —from first to last, for the space of a whole year—the mission was entirely dependent on the Maharaja for postal arrangements. Very heavy expense was necessarily incurred, and the energies of the subordinate officers were tasked to the utmost. Yet not only was aid given freely and cheerfully, but the Maharaja for a long time refused to accept any cash payment for the services thus rendered.

As regards Sir Charles Dilke's other charge, it is sufficient to state that the passport system was introduced by the late Sir H. Lawrence and Lord Dalhousie. There were two kinds of orders. The first was that no European—officer or other person—should remain in Cashmere during the winter. The other was that no European should enter Cashmere at any time without a passport from the

Punjab government. This passport system was considerably modified many years ago. I believe also that the restriction on European British subjects entering Cashmere during the winter have been, or will be, somewhat modified.

As regards the travellers being tied down by local rules as to rates, &c., if this be matter of complaint, the party to blame is not the Maharaja so much as the British Government. If Sir Charles Dilke had travelled in Hazara, Kullu, Simla, or any other of the Himalayan districts, he would have found himself tied down by local rules of quite as stringent a character as those in Cashmere. From the circumstances of all travelling in the hills, it is absolutely necessary to make regulations and to fix rates. As an Englishman and a member of Parliament has been allowed to speak out freely against supposed abuses, I hope that in a spirit of fairness you will allow me to give the words of the feudatory chieftain who has been thus attacked. The Maharaja has thus expressed himself in writing:—

"The Europeans, when they enter my dominions, press my officials most authoritatively at every place to provide coolies from Kohala to Srinuggur, and throughout their rambles in the country; and it is necessary, or rather it is a duty of mine, to procure willingly or unwillingly coolies, even from great distances. It may be said that the coolie is paid his wages, but you can well imagine what on an average a poor man receives when he is brought to the stage on the road from twenty miles distant, by which he loses five days in coming from and returning to his home, and is paid only four annas (not quite sixpence of English money) for one working day. Even supposing he is

only brought ten miles, he still loses three days, for which he gets four annas, not sufficient to keep the body and soul together during that time. Besides which, his domestic affairs, such as agricultural operations, are thrown out, and instances are not wanting of places being laid waste through the self-same cause. This is the case with the district through which the Kohala road passes, and with the district of Lall. Dr. Bellew's book confirms what I have adduced here. Though I have constructed a good road in the said districts, yet European visitors take coolies; and even if they hire ponies and mules, still the poor owners have to go through the same hardships as before described. Particularly when Europeans go on shooting or other excursions on the steep mountains, and take their supplies and luggage with them on the heads of the coolies, the sufferings of the Cashmere people may well be conceived. I fear, if the Cashmere people have to act as coolies in the winter months, they will suffer fearfully from the cold, besides having to submit to the total derangement of their domestic affairs. There are also difficulties in this as regards political affairs, because Europeans come into this country as superiors and as guests, not as my subjects go into British territory, and my officials are responsible for their shortcomings and for any kind of inconvenience the visitor might receive."

A great deal might be written regarding the policy to be adopted towards the most influential and at heart one of the most loyal of all the semi-independent chieftains who hail with pleasure the assumption of the imperial title by her most gracious Majesty; but on the present occasion it is only necessary to give facts, as I have done, to show that any comparison between the results of British influence in China and of the same influence in Cashmere must be immeasurably in favour of Maharaja Runbir Singh.

T. DOUGLAS FORSYTH.

October 21, 1876.

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